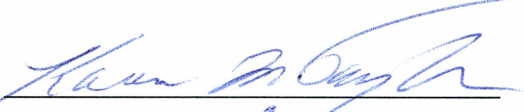
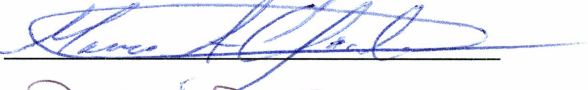
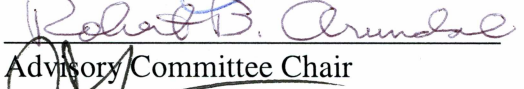
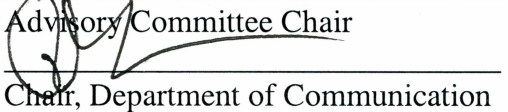


QUESTING FOR FRIENDSHIP:
A CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS


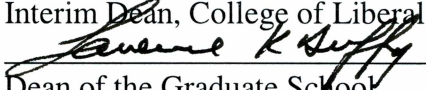
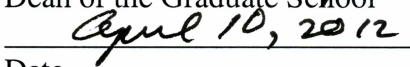
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QUESTING FOR FRIENDSHIP:
A CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

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Abstract

This study addresses the doing of friendship, the dynamic, continuous, unpredictable and emergent process of relating, as described by the Dialectics of Friendship. Examining segments of the talk among a small group of male friends playing the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons using the approach of conversation analysis, this study sought to determine the ways in which these friendship dialectics are evident in their utterance by utterance micro-level talk-in-interaction. The resources and practices they employ in interactionally achieving a number of different conversational actions as their talk unfolds were revealed and can be understood or interpreted as enactments of one or more of the contradictory poles of six dialectics, demonstrating empirically dialectical contradictions, the tensions between their polarities, and their interdependence and interaction with other dialectics arises emergently out of talk-in-interaction, and is taken up and negotiated by participants.

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Chapter 1:

Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

I have often remarked to friends that I tend to approach and understand the world in terms of stories. When I was young, I wrote many short stories, or created elaborate tales with my brother and Lego bricks. In high school, I was drawn to the stage and the act of the collaborative performance. When I came to college, I thought stories would become my passion and drive, and in a way they have, though not in the way I expected. I found myself drawn to the discipline of Communication, in particular the intricacies of interpersonal interaction. I found myself delving deeper and deeper into the complexities of relating, noting with increasing awe the subtlety, complexity, and richness of interactionally achieved understandings. Increasing exposure to communication theory led me to reflect extensively on my own relationships, and I found myself regarding nearly all of my interaction with others through an analyst's lens.

I took an early interest in computer-mediated communication, finding myself often immersed in digital interaction, drawn to the unique impact of total anonymity and fluid organizational boundaries on mediated communicative norms. I spent some time studying the volatile-yet-cohesive internet mischief-makers, Anonymous, intrigued by both their blatant disregard for societal standards of decency as well as the surprising uniformity of their group identity. The interaction within this particular internet community is intensely chaotic, marking that cohesiveness as all the more perplexing, but

soon I found myself pulling back to more fundamental concerns of face-to-face interaction: how exactly is it that relating happens at all? I found myself increasingly needing a metaphorically finer-toothed comb to explore the nitty-gritty details of interactional achievement.

At around this same time, I found myself forming some strong male friendships. For a variety of reasons, I never had many male friends growing up, but in the years since I began attending university, I found a growing bond between myself and several other men who regularly met once a week for our game-night. My friends and I, proud nerds that we are, played Dungeons & Dragons nearly every Sunday evening for two years. We still play games together every Sunday, but those times as I led my friends (and they led me) on an epic quest across a mysterious and wild sea, chasing the ghosts of legendary pirates, struck me as significant, an experience of collaboratively creating an emergent and unpredictable tale. Even as I played, however, I found myself asking questions about the nature of our interaction and what it said about us as friends.

The complexity of these interactions made it difficult to reflect on what exactly was being achieved and my curiosity was starting to get the better of me. I asked my friends if they would mind my recording one of our sessions, the result of which is a 6-hour recording of one episode from our Dungeons & Dragons campaign. For the last two years, I have worked extensively with this recording and found a veritable goldmine of interesting communicative phenomena, but it is one of my initial intuitions that has remained the most compelling for me – while my friends and I are engaged in the

activity-oriented and largely non-disclosive act of role-playing, we are doing so as friends and within that doing growing closer and more intimate in our relating. Still, exactly how this was happening was still unclear and I was uncertain how to find out.

This study addresses the doing of friendship, the dynamic, continuous, unpredictable and emergent process of relating. The talk here examined is perhaps unique to many studies of the development and maintenance of relationships in that those involved are, by and large, not explicitly talking *about* their relationships; this is a recording of people playing a game together, but while they may not be explicitly disclosing about their feelings for one another, the state of their relationships, their various relational needs or ideals, I maintain that they are still demonstrably *doing friendship*. Friendship is not an external state that imposes constraints and allowances on talk, rather it is in talk-in-interaction that individuals form, define, and maintain these friendships. It can be said, then, that there is no such thing as a *friendship*, but rather a continuous and ever-changing process of *friending*. Friending is something that occurs in the present, a mutual and continuous achievement between individuals, and thus if it is happening anywhere at all, it must be happening at the micro-level of conversational interaction. Exploring friending at this level will provide evidence to ground the dialectical tensions friends enact in their talk, the practices that give voice to the tensions inherent in and between dyads, and the ways in which these dialectics describe the formation and maintenance of friendship.

1.2 Theoretical Framework.

In seeking to understand the development of male friendship, I first struggled with the literature on relational intimacy, finding a tendency to privilege feminine ideals of self-disclosure. Frustrated by theories that did not seem able to describe the interaction I was experiencing, Baxter & Montgomery's (1996) Relational Dialectics Theory (RDT) represented for me a whole new way of talking about the inherent contradictions implicit in my male friendships. RDT holds that all relating is "a dynamic knot of contradictions, a *ceaseless interplay* between contrary or opposing tendencies" (p. 3). Communicative phenomena are described in terms of multiple, intersecting relational contradictions that exist as dialectical tensions between "antagonistic, yet interdependent" (Rawlins, 1992, p. 7) oppositions. Relational phenomena such as separateness and connectedness exist as tensional but simultaneously experienced and co-created opposites, a contradiction that demonstrates the "both/andness" or yin-and-yang quality of a relational dialectic. Jointly owned by the dyad and independently experienced by the individuals, these "oppositional tendencies are unified practically and interactively as interdependent parts of a larger social whole" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 9). The dynamic tensions inherent in the relational contradictions serve as the driving force for relational change (p. 10). These dialectical tensions create the continuous motion inherent in relating, so that dyadic interaction is not a fixed entity but "an incessant achievement" (Rawlins, 1992, p. 7). Individuals within the dyad are both producers and products of that motion, actively shaping and being shaped by their negotiated communicative choices and context (Baxter

& Montgomery, 1996, p. 13). Each communicative action is informed by past ones and creates specific constraints and affordances for future interaction, a communicative concept known as praxis (Rawlins, 1992, pp. 7, 8).

Relating must be seen as process, not product: RDT takes a holistic approach, focusing on contradictions as the site of relating, and encourages researchers to approach relationships in their totality (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 15). "Analyzed as a totality," Rawlins (1992) argues, "communicating ... involves the constant interconnection and reciprocal influence of multiple individual, interpersonal, and social factors" (p. 7). These "configurations of contradictions," taken in totality, compose and organize friendships through an ongoing process of change across the life course" (p. 8). RDT presents a more complex picture of the contradictory forces inherent in relationships, but the research on RDT has yet to explore the ways in which dialectical tensions are actually enacted in talk.

Table 1.1 Baxter & Montgomery's Relational Dialectics

Separateness and Connectedness

Openness and Closedness

Certainty and Uncertainty

Baxter & Montgomery (1996) provide dialectical conceptualizations of relational phenomena in general, such as relational development, closeness, and ambiguity through tensions in the dialectics presented in Table 1.1. More specifically, Rawlins (1992) makes use of RDT as part of his extensive work on friendships, describing friendship as a

marginal relationship, often expressly non-institutional; it is deliberate, intentional interaction. Friendship, wherein both individuals voluntarily come together, has a certain purity as compared with imposed relationships such as work roles or family ties (pp. 9, 10). It is a private bond, with its own situated morality wherein friends negotiate such relational phenomena as personal responsibility and trust (p. 10).

Table 1.2 Rawlins' Dialectics of Friendship

Contextual Dialectics:

The Private and the Public

The Ideal and the Real

Interactional Dialectics:

The Freedom to be Independent and the Freedom to be Dependent

Affection and Instrumentality

Judgment and Acceptance

Expressiveness and Protectiveness

As an outcome of his long-term research, Rawlins (1992) has identified the above six dialectics which describe the fundamental contradictions of friendship, two contextual and four interactional. The contextual dialectics describe the tensions that exist between a particular relationship and the American social context (p. 9), while the interactional dialectics describe tensions occurring within a relationship as self and other negotiate the meaning of their behaviors and practices with respect to each other (p. 15).

The first of the contextual dialectics is that of the Private and the Public. The

dialectic of the Private and Public also encapsulates the individual and social functions of friendships. For instance, friends may wear “feathers,” appellations borrowed from other contexts, in order to publicly situate their friendship, perhaps as “work friends” or, in the case of my Dungeons & Dragons group, “D & D friends” (Rawlins, 1992, p. 10).

Dominant social norms may be accepted or rejected by friends as they negotiate appropriateness for themselves within the public context. Rawlins (1992) indicates that "The ongoing rhetorical challenge to friends, therefore, is to develop and share private definitions and practices while orchestrating desired social perceptions of their relationship" (p. 10).

The dialectic of the Ideal and Real intersects closely with the Public and Private, noting the tensions between American ideals for friendship and the reality of practice. Friendships are essentially voluntary, personal relationships pervaded by a spirit of equality and mutual involvement, implying affective ties. By coming together as unique individuals, friends can overcome class and social differences while minimizing risk of exploitation through mutual acceptance, support, trust, and self-disclosure, forming the basis for companionship (Rawlins, 1992, pp. 11, 12). These ideals are defined in part by contrast with ideals for impersonal relationships. Is it simply polite to be friendly? If so, how do we differentiate true friendship? In addition, while we may idealistically regard friendship as a “pure” relationship enacted for its own sake, friendship may at times be invoked for instrumental and strategic functions, seeking “perks” or advantageous aspects of being a particular other’s friend (p. 13). Friendship is both vulnerable and elusive; its

romanticization in our culture as a “pure” relationship built on strong ideals masks what is truly a rather tenuous bond (pp. 12, 14), permeating strong friendships with actively negotiated ethical concerns (p. 13). The discursive practices of negotiating between moral and tactical definitions for friendship ultimately give evidence of the tensions in this dialectic, seen in friends' active negotiation of their ideals for personal relationships as compared with the at times impersonal or instrumental reality of the dyad's relationship.

At some level distinct from the contextual dialectics, Rawlins' (1992) four interactional dialectics of friendship describe tensions occurring within a relationship as self and other negotiate the meaning of their behaviors and practices with respect to each other (p. 15). The dialectic of Independence and Dependence describes the negotiation of two conjunctive freedoms between friends. Friendship is ultimately voluntary, thus there exists an expectation of "free choice and voluntary action" for the individual partners (p. 16). In friendship, a certain expectation exists for self to show respect for other's autonomy to make their own decisions, have their own opinions, and lead their own lives. Friends, however, also expect a certain amount of availability of the other, a freedom to depend on one another, an expectation of support and a mutual trust that a friend will be there when needed. These ideals are ultimately mutually exclusive and contradictory; emphasizing one freedom can lead to seeing the other in negative terms, such as friends that spend so much time together that any time apart can be interpreted as threatening to the relationship. As Rawlins notes, "the freedoms are based on mutually contingent choices by both parties that allow for multiple functional arrangements as well as

corruptions" (pp. 16, 17).

The dialectic of Affection and Instrumentality "formulates the interpenetrated nature of caring for a friend as an end-in-itself and/or as a means-to-an-end" (Rawlins, 1992, p. 17). Affection is often considered a defining characteristic of friendship and is frequently cited as the distinguishing factor between best and close friendships and mere casual acquaintances. Taking advantage of the strategic utility of a friendship is often equated with "false" friendship (p. 18), but this notion creates a false dichotomy: deriving instrumental benefit from a friendship, such as the strategic advantage of being the boss's friend, is not necessarily indicative of a moral lapse. Tensions exist in the expression and enactment of Affection and Instrumentality in the negotiation of trust and the questioning of motives for engaging in friendship; is other a friend out of genuine liking for self, or does other simply really appreciate self's awesome trampoline? Regarding the spontaneity and/or obligatory nature of a particular instance of caring behavior, Rawlins makes the point that "whether one perceives a spirit of generosity or reciprocity as motivating caring or helpful behaviors affects their interpretation by friends" (p. 18). Intersecting with the conjunctive freedoms of Independence and Dependence, friends can develop "fears of inadvertent exploitation and/or indebtedness" (p. 19); individuals within the dyad seek to create equivalent exchange while recognizing the intangible value of what is exchanged in a negotiation of generosity and reciprocity.

At a certain level, "all interpersonal messages are implicitly evaluative" (Laing 1971, as cited in Rawlins, 1992, p. 20), and thus all interaction must on some level attend

to the dialectic of Judgment and Acceptance. Friends can be comfortable with one another in part because of the ways in which friends affirm and accept one another, interactional patterns that “[hold the] potential to validate one's self-concept and enhance one's self-esteem” (p. 20). Acceptance comes in tension with criticisms, which can be threatening but also attend to a level of care: by offering evaluations and judgments of self and other, friends demonstrate that the other is important enough to warrant concerned critique (pp. 20, 21). These evaluations require criteria, standards of behavior that themselves must continually be negotiated and enacted; friends decide and define for themselves what is moral or appropriate behavior, creating locally situated ethics of what is and is not acceptable behavior within the friendship. It is in light of this negotiated morality that friends levy evaluations, the relative strength of a particular evaluation being contingent in part on the degree of importance or relevance a particular kind of behavior or pattern of interaction might have for the individual friend or friendship (p. 21).

Judgment and Acceptance often is tightly associated with the practices of making available or withholding such evaluations and assessments. The enactment of friendship necessarily involves "revealing personal thoughts and feelings and commenting on the messages and actions of one's friend," a tension articulated by the dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness (Rawlins, 1992, p. 22). Part of the way we know we are friends with someone lies in the manner in which we do or do not disclose our orientation to another's characteristics and behaviors. "Self limits self's own vulnerability

and strives to protect other's sensitivities while still expressing thoughts and feelings" (Rawlins 1983; as cited in Rawlins, 1992, p. 22). Effective negotiation of this dialectic might appear as openness and trust, while insensitivity to how others might react to a touchy issue can easily erode the same. In this way, friends dynamically negotiate and enact trust within the competing desires for honesty and concerned restraint.

These dialectics represent key tensional contradictions inherent in friendships, functional oppositions that can only be understood in conjunction with another, existing as give-and-take, yin-and-yang emphasis and de-emphasis, with the one always containing the seed of the other. Making judgments and evaluations of one's friend necessarily invokes the degree to which one accepts and affirms another. Likewise, autonomy and free action within a friendship can only be understood in opposition with connection and interdependence with that friend. In addition to tensions within dialectics, the invoking and enactment of a particular dialectic cannot be understood without considering how that particular dialectic functions in totality with other dialectics – often what self makes known to other via Expressiveness/Protectiveness are critical disclosures of self's evaluations (Judgment/Acceptance) of other.

Rawlins' (1992) dialectics provide a comprehensive, empirical, and grounded basis for discussing the contradictions inherent in friendships. His work on the dialectics of friendship and the complexity and messiness of doing friendship resonates strongly with my own notions of the tensions being enacted in the interaction taking place in the role-playing group studied here. Friendship is not an external force acting on these

individuals, nor a static state, but a continuously negotiated process of interaction. This study examines a moment of friending, and as Rawlins notes, “ a dialectical perspective calls for investigating and situating enactments of friendship in their concrete social conditions” (p. 273), demonstrating the need for “displaying and analyzing more of the actual discourse of friends [in order to] better represent the negotiated character of their time together” (p. 279). These dialectics of friendship should be playing out in the interaction that comprises a role-playing game such as Dungeons and Dragons, even if they are not explicitly taken up in talk. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) note that "dialectical tension does not need to be consciously felt or described," describing it as occurring "backstage," indirect but active (p. 15). As such, Rawlins comprehensive re-articulation of the dialectics of friendships provides an ideal theoretical basis for beginning to understand relational development and maintenance in the talk amongst these friends.

Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) more general formulation of RDT comes into tighter focus through Rawlins (1992) application to friendship, drawing out his six dialectics specific to the friend relationship. As Baxter and Montgomery (1996) note, “social actors give life through their communicative practices to the contradictions that organize their relationships” (p. 59) and therefore their talk-in-interaction. RDT provides a means to “further the conversation among researchers by suggesting some alternative ways to think about existing work on interaction” (p. 101), although there is still very little known about how dialectics are enacted in the talk and “how relationship parties

structure their conversations also holds relevance for our understandings of [relational dialectics] at the microlevel of talk” (p. 102). Relational dialectics are intrinsically emergent in communicative practice (p. 59) and thus, at some level, these tensions must play out via interaction, leading to the following research question:

RQ: In what ways are Rawlins' dialectics of friendship evident in the talk among a group of friends engaged in a role-playing game?

Chapter 2:

Methodology

It is useful to spend some time explicating some of the philosophical assumptions that frame this research. All research is begun with a core set of justifications about the nature of knowledge, where it lies, and how it might be discerned. Crotty (1998) challenges us to examine “what kind of knowledge do we believe will be obtained by our research [and] what characteristics do we believe that knowledge to have” (p. 2).

2.1 Assumptive Framework

The most fundamental elements of research are the investigator's assumptions regarding epistemology, or one's theory of knowledge that “embodies a certain understanding of what is entailed in knowing” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). This research progresses on a Constructionist understanding of the world. Constructionism holds that meaning or truth is not inherent in the world, waiting to be discovered, but is instead constructed and ascribed to the world via an interactive process. As Crotty notes, “all knowledge ... is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and [enacted] within an essentially social context” (p. 42). Because knowledge is constructed in this way, meaning is not objective, external, and static, but instead varies, notably from culture to culture, but also frequently from person to person, as well, as each interprets their own variations and perspectives on what objects and actions mean. Constructionism, then, “drives home unambiguously ... that there is *no* true or valid interpretation” (p. 47).

This is not the same as holding that there is no truth *at all*, or that an external reality does not exist. Constructionists do not deny the existence of a physical world, merely that any meaning is not inherent in that world and is instead interpreted in interactions with that world. The key element of constructionism that distinguishes it from both objectivism and subjectivism is intentionality. “Consciousness,” as Crotty (1998) notes, “is always consciousness *of something*” (p. 44). Sense-making is always an inherently directional act, reaching out into the world and attempting to construct meaning for objects and actions in the world through interaction with said objects and actions. In this sense of intentionality, constructionism draws attention to the connection between subject and object, with consciousness being “directed towards the object; the object is shaped by consciousness” (p. 45). Essentially, constructionism holds that meanings are not inherent in things. Meanings are interactionally grounded, developed through interpretations individuals ascribe to objects based on their own interactions with and knowledge of said object, observations of other's interactions with these same objects, and the particular feedback other individuals provide to operationalize that meaning.

With this relationship between the mind and the physical world established, one can begin to examine one's “view of the human world and social life within that world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7), that is, the philosophical perspective that informs the methods and procedures undertaken, and that provides an account of the basic assumptions and justifications therein. As noted previously, this study assumes that any meaning or

knowledge derived from reality is a result of an intentional interaction with that reality. Interactionism takes these assumptions to the next logical step by noting the social nature of how these understandings are ultimately formed. As Crotty argues, “the basic generation of meaning is always social, for the meanings with which we are endowed arise in and out of interactive human community” (p. 55). All of our knowledge of the world and our interpretations of experience are derived ultimately from a process of *social* construction.

Blumer (1969) notes three fundamental assumptions that underlie interactionism:

- “(a) That human beings act towards things [including meanings] on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them.
- (b) That the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows.
- (c) That these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 72).

Human beings understand the world first through observations of how others interact with it, and of what the world means to others. Persons form meanings for the world as they interact with others in the world and have their provisional interpretations influenced by the ways in which others take up or reject those interpretations. In this way, meanings for and knowledge of the world is intrinsically dependent on *interactions* with others in that world.

With these assumptions in place, one can narrow in on the particular focus, strategy, or rationale that comprises this study's methodology (Crotty, 1998). Methodologies direct research towards the particular type of data of interest and shape how it ought to be gathered. This research turns to Garfinkel's 1967 work (as cited in Crotty, 1998) on ethnomethodological inquiry. Garfinkel draws attention to the “everyday world [as] characterized by consistency, coherence, planfulness, method and reproducibility” (Crotty, 1998, p. 219). There is no inherent reason the world should be seen as orderly, consistent, or structured, but in our interactions with others we nevertheless “work hard” (p. 219) to make it appear this way. It is these methods of organization and structure – the accounts individuals make for themselves and others of the ways in which the world can be made sensible and reproducible – that “form the focal point of ethnomethodological investigation ... [in particular] the practices that [individuals] use to produce and maintain the setting as something understandable, consistent and accountable” (p. 219). By close examination of these practices of sense-making, researchers can begin to bring to light the particular manner by which individuals (or indeed, particular groups of individuals) construct social worlds.

2.2 Method

Within the framework of ethnomethodology, Conversational Analysis (CA) is the research method adopted in this study to probe the organizing practices inherent in everyday discourse, providing a means of grounding complex concepts like the dynamic interplay of the endogenous dialectical tensions of friendship in actual talk. Sidnell

(2010) defines CA as an approach seeking “to describe, analyze and understand talk as a basic constitutive feature of human social life” (p. 1). CA seeks to provide evidence for interactionally achieved understandings as demonstrated in actual discourse, revealed through careful examination of interconnected domains of conversational organization, and interpreting phenomena “from the position of the actor” (Garfinkel 1967; as cited in Arundale, 2010, p. 155). Sidnell (2010) points to a basic assumption that “any bit of talk ... is the product of several 'organizations' which operate concurrently and intersect in the utterance ... [this is a] decentralized or distributed view of human action that places emphasis on ... the structures of activity within which [individuals] are embedded” (p. 2). By carefully examining these “simultaneously operative and relevant organization of practice” (p. 2), one can begin to establish what is being interactionally achieved as understood by the participants themselves. In this way, “any utterance can be seen [and understood] as the unique product of a number of intersecting machineries or organizations of practice” (p. 5). CA, then, directs researchers to limit interpreting to the micro-level of talk, grounding such interpretations to the talk itself.

The principal thrust of CA work has been to describe various machineries of turn-taking, sequence organization, repair, etc., that operate in and enable all talk. Examining how social phenomena like intimacy, gender, relationships, etc., arise in talk-in-interaction has not been a primary goal, although there has been important work done in all these areas since CA began in the late 1960's, as for example in Maynard and Zimmerman's (1984) work on achieving acquaintanceship and anonymity in stranger and

established dyads. I utilize CA to examine segments of the six hour audio recording of my Dungeons and Dragons role-play group, with the goal of grounding the achieving of one or more of Rawlins (1992) six dialectics of friendship in the conversational interaction.

Consistent with Maynard and Zimmerman (1984), for example, Arundale (2010) has recently argued that relating is "a phenomenon endogenous in the interactional achieving of talk/conduct" (p. 155), as opposed to exogenous to talk. In particular, in order to establish an endogenous phenomenon as integral to participant's interactional achievement, researchers must examine "the evidence the participants themselves provide in the process of 'displaying' to one another their interpretations of the other's talk/conduct" (p. 155), and doing so requires that the research attend to Schegloff's (1991) concepts of participant orientation and procedural consequentiality.

While the analyst cannot reconstruct actor interpretations, he or she can observe participant uptake to establish interactionally achieved understandings, including understandings of the relationship within which all talk is embedded. In order to ground relational phenomena in interaction, the conversation analyst must be able to accomplish the following four tasks: (a) describe an observable relational phenomenon "as achieved in interaction coordinate with the achieving of meaning and action ..., conceptually in view of alternative framings [and] operationally in the specific instances of talk being examined" (Arundale, 2010, p. 156); (b) demonstrate an orientation to the phenomena on the part of the participants; (c) demonstrate procedural consequentiality of specific

constraints and affordances the phenomena has on the interactional trajectory; and finally, where possible, (d) generalize the "procedural aspects of the production of talk/conduct" found in specific instances of talk to instances not yet observed (pp. 156-157). Even in instances where (d) is established, (b) and (c) must still be examined in every new instance of talk/conduct because "what participants achieve in the moment of interaction is their own, new sequence of talk/conduct, even if that sequence is recreating a familiar pattern" (p. 157).

In establishing the achievement of relational phenomena within interaction, an analyst may need to "draw on features of the currently invoked context" such as enacted aspects of identity, invoked external texts (such as the rule-sets that govern a Dungeons & Dragons play-session), and the history of talk/conduct between the participants (Arundale, 2010, p. 157). Because such situational evidence is often limited, and because the evidence the participants provide in their talk is primary, there will often be limits on the extent to which relational phenomena can be said to be interactionally achieved among the participants in any given conversation. Furthermore, the analyst must consider how dyads and group dynamics interact, as "the challenge in arguing any such generalization beyond the particular situations and participants examined is that both across dyads, and within and across social and cultural groups, even the most highly typified forms of relating have myriad instantiations" (p. 158).

Beach (1996) identifies one additional problem that has consequences for this study, namely the inherent problems of a priori theorizing: "empirical observations drawn

from naturally occurring interactions repeatedly make clear how 'theory construction,' when operationalized via indirect measures of social processes, is frequently and overwhelmingly premature" (p. 15). There is a tendency in much theorizing towards extreme vagueness about the actual process by which social phenomenon are achieved in interaction. This thesis project explores the extent to which that vagueness can be reduced with respect to Rawlins (1992) theorizing regarding friendship. Friendship is not an external force or drive acting on the participants and predetermining their actions, it is enacted in the interaction as "an ongoing, methodically produced, locally occasioned, inherently accountable, altogether practical achievement" (p. 15). Ultimately, any argument for evidence of endogenous phenomena such as the dialectics of friendship must emerge from the talk-in-interaction.

There are five hours and forty-five minutes of conversational data in this record, but only five minutes and forty seconds will be examined in detail for the purposes of this study. While there is much that can be examined, the constraints of time and focus directs that this study concentrate on single instances of talk over an extended time, not unlike Beach's (2009) work on family conversations over a thirteen month span of time in *A Natural History of Family Cancer*. While much conversational analysis has focused on single episodes and examined a range of machineries occurring therein, Beach takes a different approach in narrowing his focus to a few key phenomena that occur and re-occur in separate instances, and are "linked (e.g., by topics and concerns comprising the business at hand) across larger spans of time" (p. 37). In this study, drawing multiple

excerpts from a single extended interaction should “reveal universal practices” of friendship dialectics for this group.

An additional feature of this study having methodological complications and challenges brought on by multi-party conversation. There are seven loud and boisterous males involved in this interaction, regularly talking over one another or simply all at once, which, at the very least, made transcription a sometimes daunting task. The vast majority of CA work has focused on dyadic interactions, and much of that constrained to telephone conversations (Sidnell, 2010). As Schegloff (2009) has noted, several matters of the organizing practices of group conversations have remained unexamined. While this study is not specifically attempting to articulate issues of multi-party talk, it should be noted that this is a relatively unexplored avenue of inquiry and therefore it may be necessary to articulate some of the known practices unique to this context.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedures and Participants

The interaction examined here, as noted previously, is a lengthy recording of a single extended session of a small group of friends playing the role-playing game, Dungeons & Dragons. The recording was an informal affair, initiated by myself primarily for the purpose of creating an entertaining artifact my friends and I would enjoy listening to and laughing at retrospectively. Having already made some progress on my undergraduate degree in Communication at the point I made the recording, I had some idea that the recording might be valuable as a case-study, perhaps of gaming culture or the social construction of fantasy worlds, although I had no research agenda in either

making the recording or in running the game. Because I could see the potential usefulness of such a sample of our discourse, inane or absurd as it often was, before making the recording I informed the players of the data's potential usefulness in my studies and asked for their verbal permission to use the recording in my future academic work. I assured them I would make certain each person would remain anonymous in any transcriptions taken from the recording, and my group of players agreed. In the transcriptions that will be examined in this study, their names (though not my own) have been altered to preserve their confidentiality. Approval to use this existing body of data for the purposes of this thesis research was sought and obtained from the University of Alaska Institutional Review Board.

This Dungeons and Dragons group consisted of a group of seven males (including me), ranging in age from 21 to 25 years of age. The group varied in its relative experience with the game, with three of the members having been playing together in a previous campaign ran by a different facilitator for nearly a year, one member having played off-and-on since his childhood, and finally three members who were almost totally new to the game. The group would meet nearly every Sunday afternoon and play for three to seven hours, with the average session lasting around five hours in length.

2.4 Researcher as Participant and Analyst

In most CA research the researcher as analyst of the conversation(s) is not a participant in them. In this case, I am both the analyst and a participant, which presents an important methodological challenge. I cannot deny that I bring to this research a

wealth of knowledge of Dungeons and Dragons in general, and of the people and events of this particular campaign from which this recording is drawn, especially in my role as leader or Dungeon Master (DM) directing the overall flow of game-play.

About one year prior to this recording, I happened to be visiting a friend during their weekly game-session. I was invited to stay and observe and, after expressing an interest, was invited to “roll up,” or create a character and join the group led by our previous DM. That lengthy series of game-sessions comprised an epic story (or campaign), during which time each of our characters had gained experience, special abilities, rare items, and unique histories. When that campaign came to an end, each of us were left with characters we had invested great amounts of time and energy developing, but no further story in which to make use of them. It was at that time that I decided to take on the role of DM, to begin a new campaign, a new epic quest in which we could continue to use those characters.

At the time, we were short on players and so had invited various friends to create new characters and play in the new campaign I had spent some weeks devising. One week prior to this recording being made, I held the inaugural game-session that introduced players new and old to my campaign. K and S, friends and room mates at whose house all of our sessions had been held, were present for that first session, as was A and B. B had recently become a tenant at this same house with K and S, but had never played Dungeons and Dragons (or indeed, any role-playing game) prior to this. A was a recent friend that had come by and watched some of our sessions towards the end of the

previous campaign ran by the previous DM and had long been interested in playing, but had not until now had the opportunity to join us. That said, A was still relatively new to the game itself.

A week later, I held the second session and, with verbal permission, recorded it. In addition to the participants mentioned above, we added two additional players, Bf and M. Bf, like A, had seen a few of our game sessions from the previous campaign, had long been interested in trying, but had only recently had the time to invest in it. Bf and A were also, it should be noted, acquaintances of myself and the other member of the group, tending to go to the same parties and running in overlapping social networks, but were not close friends with the rest of the group. M, on the other hand, was a close friend of mine but only a casual acquaintance of the other players. M was also an experienced player of Dungeons and Dragons, but had never played in a campaign with myself or any other member of the group.

My recall of events is rather limited by the significant time that has elapsed since this recording was made. I took no field notes except what was relevant to my role as DM and the story I hoped to construct through the game. Ultimately, my memory, intuition, or interpretations about what might have been meant or how others reacted is seriously tainted, especially without equivalent accounts from the other participants. For this reason, it is crucial that all discussions of interactionally achieved endogenous phenomena be grounded in actual organizations of practice, rather than my recollected interpretations of the conversation, or what I might believe to be their or my own

intentions. Fortunately, it is exactly this that CA encourages us to do; Arundale's (2010) observations on grounding endogenous phenomena are eminently applicable to this case. Researchers and researcher-as-participant alike are tasked with grounding any interpretations to observable practices: relational phenomena must be integral to what is being interactionally achieved in that participants must be observably orienting to the phenomena the relational phenomena must have sequential consequences that are equally observable. In this way, I constrain myself from considering my intuitions about even my own talk. Ultimately, evidence of phenomena must be observed in the talk itself.

Grounding the dialectics of friendship with CA will take some effort, but ultimately, such relational phenomena must be playing out at the interactive level. Relating is something that parties must “act into” (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 45) rather than something that acts upon them, so if these dialectics can be found anywhere, they will be found at the interactional level. “Relationships,” the researchers hold, “are sustained to the extent that [they are] given voice” (p. 76). Indeed, Baxter & Montgomery (1996) have noted the value of a number of significant studies conducted with ongoing communication events and subsequent discourse analysis (VanLear, 1991; Baxter & Widenmann, 1993; Altman & Ginat, 1989; as cited in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Rawlins (1992) further states that “a dialectical perspective calls for investigating and situating enactments of friendship in their concrete social conditions over time” (p. 273) and that “displaying and analyzing more of the actual discourse of friends better represents the negotiated character of their time together” (p. 279). It is precisely that

move to better represent friendships that this study seeks to achieve.

Chapter 3:

Analysis

Friendship, and indeed all relating, is ultimately grounded in talk. Relationships are formed, changed, and even ended through talk, and without talk there could be no relationship. As noted in 1.0, this is a recording of people playing a game together, and while they do not, as a rule, explicitly disclose about their feelings for one another, the state of their relationships, and their various relational needs or ideals, I maintain that they are still *doing* friendship, a continuous and ever-changing process of friending.

3.1 Background for the Analysis

In order to understand this instance of friending, certain aspects of the game being played must be made clear. In addition, certain facts must be made known about the history of the participants prior to the start of the recording. First, some necessary context about the game itself: Dungeons and Dragons (3.5 edition) is one of the more well-known examples of a pen-and-paper role-playing game. A role-playing game is a structured system for collaborative story-telling wherein players take on the roles of characters within the story and attempt to accomplish a task, solve a mystery, or go on a quest. The process is facilitated by a neutral narrator and arbiter, the Dungeon Master, or DM for short. It is the DM's role to narrate and describe the events as they unfold around the players, play the parts of all other characters and enemies, and interpret player actions and the ramification of those actions.

Dungeons & Dragons features a highly complex ruleset governing player

interaction, providing a systematic series of constraints and allowances to determine what players can and cannot do within the confines of the story. It is within this context that my friends and I are interacting.

As noted in 2.4, three of our participants, K, S, and myself (DM), had been playing Dungeons & Dragons together every Sunday evening for over a year, led by our previous DM, M had quite a lot of experience playing with other groups, and A, Bf, and B had relatively little experience with the game. One week prior to this recording being made, I held the inaugural game-session that introduced players new and old to my campaign. K and S, friends and room mates at whose house all of our sessions had been held, were present for that first session, as was A and B. A week later, I held the second session, at which time we added two additional players, Bf and M.

This analysis will proceed through five segments excised from the recording, presented in chronological order. Segment (1) involves an exchange primarily between M and K (with a notable aside between K and S) discussing the nature of K's in-game character. Segment (2) presents the negotiation and enactment of K and DM's respective game-roles and their impact on K's autonomy as a player. Segment (3) examines the negotiation and uptake of one of the character's deaths. Segment (4) considers some extended multi-party interaction as the players take up and orient to the justifications for aiding K during an ambush, with considerations given towards self-preservation of individual player's characters as well as certain game mechanics that will be explained. The analysis concludes with segment (5), which chronologically follows (4) closely and

features continued player reaction to the ambush.

3.2 *Super Pimp Slap*

At this early point in the recording, the players and dungeon master are busy with the set-up of the game. I am preoccupied throughout this interaction, struggling with an unresponsive laptop as I attempt to open various files and electronic books that I will need in order to fulfill my role as arbiter. K and other players have been describing K's character at some length already, with M in particular asking various probing questions.

(1) dndrecord.mp3 0:05:19

01 M ^Eastern monk? Or. Western monk.
 02 (.)
 03 ? Hmm=
 04 M =Like ^western battle monk? O:r *more* eastern style.
 05 M OR more like uh. *(Native.)*
 06 (1.5)
 07 K ^Really he's-
 08 S >Iz like if ya took a< pimp,
 09 (.)
 10 S >and combined it with a< monk:
 11 (1.5)
 12 K [Like a west bank] style mung=
 13 S [((unclear))-]
 14 M =Mmkay.
 15 (.)
 16 K ^^Super pimp^^ SLA:::P Eh huh huh huh huh .hhh=

M continues his probing in 01 with a question about the type of monk that K is playing in the game.¹ In 01, M provides two possible broad categories of monk along

¹ While Dungeons & Dragons provides a general template for a character who has trained in martial arts, referred to as a monk within the game, this is really only a general description, as the exact kind or style of martial artist is largely a question of how the particular player chooses to characterize or present their character, or what they choose to specialize in.

with a rising intonation to mark it as a question. A noticeable pause follows, succeeded by “Hmm.” M's specification of particular options in 01 seems to constitute an action-type preference (Sidnell, 2010) for a response that selects one of those two options, and while it is unclear who exactly utters the vocalic filler at 03, it can be seen as a dis-preferred response to the question by failing to select either of the two options M presents. M seems to orient to the delay in uptake combined with the dis-preferred grunt as a lack of clarity in his own question, as his next utterance at 04 expands on the options presented in 01; “like” links 04 with 01, marking 04 as a continuation and simultaneously attending to the previous hesitation by indicating that what follows will expand on 01. In addition, the use of “like” here suggests that 01 needs expansion, operationalizing the hesitation inherent in 02 and 03 as confusion concerning the relative clarity of 01's question. To address this confusion, M expands slightly on the two options and even appends a third.

A lengthy pause follows before K starts to answer in 07, but it is unclear where he might be going with this utterance as he is shortly interrupted by S. K and S, it should be noted, have been playing Dungeons & Dragons together at this point for over a year now, and the two of them are quite familiar with the other's character. S, in 08, mirroring M's use of like, provides a short description of K's character, placing emphasis on two disparate examples of what K's character is “like.” The use of “pimp” here is notable as referencing other texts that are quite separate from the invoked contexts of styles of monk and their implementation within Dungeons & Dragons. This combination of texts is referred to as an intertextuality, which S distinctly marks by emphasizing the two

disparate texts of “pimp” and “monk.” This is followed by a lengthy pause before S & K come in together at 12 and 13, with S getting talked over and dropping out as K takes up this contribution, demonstrating his orientation to S's characterization. His use of “west bank style” here appears to be a reference to something related with pimps, given it's placement subsequent to S's intertextual simile. K's uptake at 12 closely mirrors S's contribution in 10 in tone, rhythm, and even number of syllables. In fact, K and S's utterances at 10, 12, and 13 are so similar that it is rather difficult to distinguish who is saying what and only becomes clear after repeated listenings. All of this seems to indicate K's agreement and alignment with S's characterization, and furthers the contribution in 12 by providing his own take on the intertextuality S has stated. In 16, K seems to take this collaboration to the extreme with an unusual and quite boisterous outburst. The utterance begins with a high falsetto “super pimp” and then drops the pitch dramatically as he shouts the elongated “SLAP,”² ending the turn with some extended laughter. Given the preceding work done to establish the exact style of monk that K is playing, S's interjected characterization, and K's subsequent uptake and elaboration, 16 can be seen as still further elaboration, an in-character example of what a pimp-monk hybrid might look and sound like.

M appears curiously non-committal with regard to this elaborate characterization. S steps in at 08 to answer M's query from 01 and 04, despite it being directed at K, but M does not provide any feedback, despite a lengthy pause at 11. One would ordinarily

² A “pimp slap” is a back-handed cuff.

expect that, subsequent to answering a question, the speaker who made the query would then provide some sort of indication as to whether that query had indeed been answered. Indeed, when M's original query is not met with a quick response, he then almost immediately expands, demonstrating an orientation to the pause and uncertain “hmm” as a need for further clarity. It could be that, since it is S that actually answered the question and K has not yet acknowledged it in 11, M might hold back. As it turns out, it is after K's elaboration of S's characterization several turns later that M finally indicates any kind of uptake with a vague response of “mmkay” at 14. In any case, given M's minimal response, and K and S's earlier collaboration to produce the intertextuality, K's utterance at 16 can be seen not as a further elaboration done for M's benefit, but as a recognition and appreciation of S's characterization.

K's outburst and laughter marks the end of an aside with S that began at 08. First, M withholds his uptake of S's interrupting intertextual characterization until elaborated on by K, separating K and S from M. Second, K accepts and aligns with this characterization in 12, both verbally and also nonverbally in terms of tone and rhythm, and then follows this alignment by quickly producing and performing a loud example. By collaborating with S, K is orienting to the mutual involvement and affective ties characteristic of friendship that are among the ideals of friendship describe by Rawlins (1992) in considering the dialectic of the Ideal and the Real, as well as privileging the enactment of Affection with S over the Instrumentality of the task concerns of answering M's question. Friends construct their own unique social reality that is enacted through mutual

achievements such as K and S's collaborative creation of the pimp-style monk. K and S, by quickly and creatively aligning with each other as demonstrated by the similarity in their utterances, affirm their status as highly involved friends who appreciate another's actions. Functionally, S and K's aside does not seem to serve the “real” task of answering M's question, but instead reaffirms the relational connection between K and S. M, on the other hand, never really responds to this intertextual aside. In essence, from M's perspective K and S's aside fails to address the “real” communicative action, i.e., answering M's questions about the particular characteristics of K's character. In this way, actions taken to emphasize ideals of friendship can be seen to be in tension with the real or instrumental aspects of negotiating conversational actions.

3.3 Tattoos

- 17 M =>So iz< (.) you ave like, religious symbols?
 18 and stuff on im [((unclear))]
 19 K [No]
 20 Actually. Here lemme describe him.
 21 I have uh- certain magical abilities. I have tattoos on me? Uh-
 22 >But I didn't< take n prestige class for'em
 23 *althou::gh I uh took* uh quirks [for'em.]
 24 M [Okay.]
 25 Ta[toos] are awesome though.
 26 K [so uh-]
 27 M Maybe um have your guy just be shirtless=
 28 K =[yeah. And- dude- and]
 29 M [((unclear))]
 30 K and my tattoos are those uh. Wer.
 31 My tattoos is actually more of a scarification?

By the end of 16, there is no clear evidence of whether or not M's question has been answered. At best, M acknowledges what has been said in 14, but then immediately

asks a new question in 17, providing no uptake of or orientation to K's humorous outburst. By failing to attend to K and S's collaborative answer, M can be understood as taking their aside as somehow insufficient. Whatever was achieved by K and S, it does not seem to be the sort of information M is looking for as he continues to become more specific and detailed in his questioning. Rather than ask a general question about style, in 17 M narrows down the focus of his question to specifics of K's character's appearance.

K's answer in 19 once again does not seem to be quite what M is looking for. In 20, K first secures several turn construction units ("TCUs; the units out of which turns are built" (Raymond, 2004, p. 186).) for his next turn of talk, asking to "lemme describe him" and then goes on to describe a particular game mechanic his character has exploited.³ Despite the excessive attention paid by K to issues of game mechanics, the aspect of K's description that M actually takes up in 25 are the tattoos themselves and what they physically look like, with no real concern for what they do or how they work. He demonstrates his lack of concern for these matters by overtaking K's extended description, overlapping his "okay" with the end of K's 23 and then talking over K, effectively preventing K from declaring the ultimate upshot of his preceding description, pre-announced by K's use of "so" (Raymond, 2004). Raymond has noted that individuals typically use "so" as a preface for utterances that "articulate the upshot of prior talk to mark the completion of complex turns or activities and thereby pursue a limited range of

³ K's character is a monk, a fighting character class that normally is unable to use magic. However, K has made use of a loophole, asking a powerful wizard to tattoo spells into his skin, but in exchange K's character now has a number of key flaws, or "quirks." "Prestige classes" are another means by which K could have circumvented the no-magic-for-monks rule.

actions from their recipients” (p. 186). This might include such actions as marking a transition or boundary between activities, marking the linkages among activities, or making clear the import of prior talk. In general, then, “so-prefaced upshots are one practice for indexing or highlighting the connection between a current turn and a more encompassing unit of organization in which it participates” (p. 189). K's use of “so” here in 26 then seems to be a preface to what the upshot of his preceding discussion of his tattoos and the game-mechanics associated with them. Instead, in 27, M shifts the focus away from game-mechanics and towards physical descriptions. K seems to orient to this significantly more specific context, demonstrated by his immediate attempt in 28 and then in 30 and 31 to articulate the particular qualities of his character's tattoos as a form of scarification. However, this leads to a series of aligning and dis-aligning moves on both their parts regarding the nature and color of K's tattoos.

30 K and my tattoos are those uh. Wer.
31 K My tattoos is actually more of a scarification?
32 K But it's very fi::ne? [So::]
33 M [oh so's] all red?
34 K Well no- nn- y'know how=
35 DM ==>Oghay<=
36 K =y'know how, certain.
37 K Like there's this certain scarification
38 K that makes a very smoo::th uh um.
39 (1.0)
40 K How can I put it like- build up of skin?
41 K Y'know it's=
42 M =yeah, blister.=
43 K =Yeah it's- yeah almost like a smooth blister? Y'know?
44 K That's basically what he's done with his entire body.
45 M So it's kinda [like-]
46 K [>so its ac]tually< quite beautiful?
47 K [but]

48 M [It show-] it shows
 49 M kind of re:d. Like it-
 50 K Mmm[mm.]
 51 M [or uh-] what's the color of his skin.
 52 K Uh, white.

First, M asks in 33 if K's tattoos are “all red” in response to K's previous assertion that his tattoos are the result of scarification, displaying to K M's assumption that scars are typically red. K orients to this displayed assumption as problematic by disagreeing in 34, and goes on to elaborate about the scarification process. Note that, once again as in 20-23, K provides a nonconfirming response to M's query and then goes on to elaborate on a closely related matter that nevertheless does not directly answer M's original query. K attempts to describe, beginning in 34, the kind of “smooth” scarring he has envisioned for his character, but has some difficulty with the exact terminology he wishes to apply, hesitating for a full second and announcing his trouble in 40. Here, M offers K the candidate description “blister” in 42, which K then accepts in his repeated “yeah” in 43 before going on to doing a reworking of 38 using the new term supplied by M, suggesting K's alignment with M. In 48 and 49, M, by restating his question from 33, displays an orientation to the collaborative description he and K have constructed as somehow addressing the problem K drew attention to with his nonconfirming response in 34, but simultaneously displaying some uncertainty on M's part about whether or not his question (are the tattoos red?) has been answered. When K responds with yet another nonconfirming response in 50 (this time with a elongated nonverbal hum), M can infer that a problem still exists, that is, that his now repeated description of the color of the

scars is inconsistent with how K would describe his character. M's subsequent request for more information in 51 about the color of K's character's skin displays to K M's recognition that his color-assertion was problematic. At this stage, M has demonstrated to K that he has aligned with K about where the trouble lay, but its exact nature still eludes M as he requests more information in order to answer this question. This marks a shift in M's tack, displaying a recognition of and orientation to K's repeated failure to directly answer M's questions (as in 20-23, 34-46, and again in the inarticulate 50) or to specifically explain the exact nature of what it is that K finds problematic, displayed by his nonconfirming responses.

- 48 M [It show-] it shows
 49 M kind of re:d. Like it-
 50 K Mmm[mm.]
 51 M [or uh-] what's the color of his skin.
 52 K Uh, white.
 53 M Okay so: th' scars [a:re]
 54 K [>they'd be<] kinda like me,
 55 K more, like, [when]
 56 M [>so like<]
 57 M old scars *that* sho::w-
 58 K Mmhm=
 59 M =like darker.
 60 (.5)
 61 K Yeah like this.
 62 M Yeah something like that. Pinker. Pinkish.
 63 K Well (.) Not really. I- I look at it as as more of a white
 64 (.5)
 65 M Oh [okay]
 66 K ['s white-] 's white inna (.) yeah.

As noted, M first asks about the character's skin color in 51, and for once K responds with a direct answer, which M then utilizes as he begins a more nuanced

description, marked by the use of “so” in 53 as a pre-announcement that what follows is an upshot of the new information received (Raymond, 2004). In essence, if K's character is white but his scars are not red (as M would evidently normally assume them to be), then perhaps the scars are “old scars,” which would be “darker.” K seems to agree with this description in 58 and 61, even referencing some sort of unspecified example (likely a scar on K himself, though it is impossible to say with any certainty), until M provides a new assertion of the color in 62 as “pinkish,” K responds in 63 with a “well” prefaced disagreement and then with a repair in his assertion of “it as more of a white.” M's subsequent “Oh,” a classic change-of-state token, displays an orientation to the new information as resolving the issues K and M have been extensively negotiating (Heritage, 2005). Note that K's assertion in 63 could easily have followed M's query in 33 and saved both a fair amount of disagreement and mutual incomprehension. Indeed, K has repeatedly not directly answered M's questions, instead providing extended descriptions of closely related matters. K seems to go to great lengths to avoid other-initiated repair, doing what he can to provide additional information to M that M might be able to use to answer his question for himself.

How might one understand K and M's protracted “negotiating” of an answer to M's questions in terms of the dialectics of friendship? Recall that, according to Rawlins (1992), the dialectic of the freedom to be independent and the freedom to be dependent describes the tension between the essential autonomy American friends typically afford one another and the necessary availability and copresence that friendship requires (p. 16).

Another voicing of this dialectic might be the tension between Separateness and Connectedness identified by Baxter & Montgomery (1996). K repeatedly separates his own understandings of his character from M's supplied characterizations and assumptions. He seems to reject the options M presents in 01-05 of styles of monk, evidencing a separateness and independence from M regarding the ways in which monks in general and K's monk in particular can be characterized. K has primary epistemic rights here to define and describe his character (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), which he attends to by indexing his independence from M's descriptions. K disaligns from M in 19, directly rejecting M's provisional description, and then going on to initiate an extended description of the game mechanics associated with his character, an agenda somewhat disparate from M's queries of physical details. And while M and K do briefly align on the subject of tattoos in general in 25-28, and again on the texture of the scarring in 42 and 43, K also declares on three separate occasions, first at 34, then 50, and finally in 63, that his character's tattoos do not correspond to M's assumptions about the color of scars. These repeated moves towards separateness and individual autonomy in how K understands his character stands in marked contrast to the aside negotiated between K and S in 8-16, where S's contribution is immediately accepted and elaborated on, Concluding with K's loud demonstration of his appreciation of the constructed intertextuality. In 8-16, K and S demonstrate to each other as well as to others in the group their interdependence and ability to speak for the other, whereas K does not accept (if not outright rejects) M's characterizations. In this way, K demonstrates his

independence from M in contrast to his interdependence with S.

With regard to the on-going process of friending, recall that K and S have an established friendship, as well as an established relationship as players of the game. K and M, on the other hand, still have much to negotiate about the nature of their relationship. At this early stage, K and M seem to be emphasizing the autonomy/independence aspect of the dialectic as they negotiate their disparate approaches to the game. Still, some interdependencies are forming, notable particularly in M's shift from looking for direct responses to his categorical queries about K's character – the style of his monk, the color of the scars – to engaging in detail-oriented information-seeking behaviors that will allow him to attempt to answer his more general questions for himself.

The tension inherent between Judgment and Acceptance is also apparent in this interaction. At the same time as it marks his separation and independence from M, K's nonconfirming moves throughout this section serve as evaluations of M's contributions, and vice versa. Rawlins (1992) notes that “all interpersonal messages are implicitly evaluative,” and therefore any move to align or dis-align with a particular action involves an implicit assessment of said action. When M fails to attend to or recognize K's humorous performance at 16, he orients to the outburst as failing to attend to the question he's asked, to the point that in 17 he rephrases the question yet again, this time becoming more specific. In essence, M is levying a judgment on K and S's aside as failing to attend to his questioning. Likewise, K's repeated failures to attend directly to M's questions can

be seen as a judgment on the question themselves. In 19, K, having abruptly asserted that his character does not have any religious symbols, redirects the talk towards a game-mechanics concern regarding his character's abilities. In 26, he completely fails to attend to M's suggestion of "have your guy just be shirtless" before redirecting towards how the tattoos/scars are made. In 30-39, K says "well, no" in response to M's question about the color of the scars before returning to further elaboration of the scarification process. Each of these subtle shifts suggests that M's contribution in each instance was somehow inappropriate or insufficient with regards to describing K's character, M's uptake in each instance being some further move that might help him develop an impression of K's character that K can accept as in line with his vision of his character. The dialectic of Judgment and Acceptance seems evident in M and K's prolonged negotiating, perhaps in conjunction with the dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness.

There is a negotiation between friends of what can and should be shared with or expressed to the other, as well as what steps should be taken to protect the other's feelings from being hurt. Pomerantz (1984) and others have documented a preference or systematic privileging in talk toward agreement with prior contributions, as opposed to disagreement. Given this normative preference, participants can be seen to design their contributions to avoid disagreement or to mediate it somehow. What K seems to be attending to throughout this section is avoiding outright disagreement, directly criticizing M's questioning, instead taking measures that can be understood as protecting M from being overtly criticized. In short, the dialectics of Expressiveness and Protectiveness, as

well as Judgment and Acceptance and Independence and Dependence, appear to provide an insight on how this curious and extended pattern of questioning and redirection functions in the developing friendship between M and K.

3.4 That's Yur Attacks

Still, an isolated instance of these dialectics playing out can only reveal so much about their usefulness in understanding friending in talk. A longitudinal perspective is needed (Beach, 2009). The next section of talk examined takes place over an hour later after the game is well underway. A certain amount of context must be provided, however, for this talk to appear even remotely comprehensible to those unfamiliar with the workings of Dungeons and Dragons and the specifics of the collaborative story being constructed.

Prior to this section of talk, the players had been attacked⁴ by a small group of horse-sized ant-creatures called Formians. Early on in the fight, M had activated an ability that caused much of the battlefield to be cast into an impenetrable darkness. This gave his character (who can see in the dark) a considerable advantage, but simultaneously made things significantly more difficult for the rest of the party,⁵ none of whom could see through the magical darkness. Prior to this happening, K and M had been fighting one of the ant-creatures, all three standing in a line with M just behind the creature and K

⁴ In Dungeons and Dragons, combat is resolved via a turn-based system, wherein each player's character, as well as any additional characters or enemies controlled by the DM, are allowed a limited number of actions to perform (attacking, moving, using items, performing skills, or activating certain abilities) their respective game-turns, in an order that is determined as a battle begins.

⁵ Any attacks made inside the area of darkness would be subject to a 50% chance of missing, decided via a coin toss, before the player would be allowed to actually attempt the attack.

attacking at range from its opposite side. In the next section of talk, K is attacking the ant-creature in front of M, both blindly and from a distance, working from where he remembered the creature to last be. The creature had not yet moved and so K is able to guess where to attack and lands two successful hits. The talk picks up as K is announcing the total number of points of damage⁶ his attacks have dealt.

(2) dndrecord.mp3 01:15:20

01 K Soo (.) the -the first go is gonna be forty six?

02 (1.0)

03 DM Lessee this is taskmaster C? Mmkay.

04 K Yeah.

05 (1.4)

06 DM Ehakay.

07 (1.0)

08 K So the first one's fortysix, the next one is fortyseven=

09 DM =O*kay, >he's dead<.=

10 K =Okay^. (.6) Alrihahh=

11 DM =<And that's yur> attacks. [Um.]

12 K [>Ahcan] I not<

13 K ^go for >the other guy<?

14 (.)

15 DM >Well actually< you wouldn't necessarily know if he'd fuh-

16 DM If he'd fell so uh:: and since h- since Matt is right there=

17 DM =Matt's going to have to dodge your next two attacks=

18 M =mhmhuh Aawesome.

19 DM So uh:::, [roll] your attack rolls for the last two attacks.

20 M [Do it.]

K's attacks were powerful, and after two attacks I announce in 09 that “he's dead,” referring to the creature. In 11, though, DM increments this declaration with another, and this line is delivered in a markedly different way from 09. The announcement in 09 is

⁶ Each character has a set number of Health Points, or HP, which represents the amount of damage that a creature or character can take before succumbing to their injuries and dying. Any amount of damage an attack does takes away that many HP from the target.

delivered slightly soft, with a rhythmic DA-da, DA-da pattern, but 11 follows a more measured rhythm, more of a DA DA DA da-DA. The delivery is somehow more final and definite, still a declaration like the last in terms of action, but there is an element of authority present in 11 that I think can be demonstrated.

K acknowledges the new information supplied by DM in 10, follows with a short pause, and then self-selects while simultaneously laughing (perhaps at being pleased with his own success, the ease with which the creature died, or something similar – what exactly K is laughing about is unclear). It could be, especially given the laughter, that this was not actually a move to secure a continued turn, but DM orients to it as such in his deliberate and measured response. 11 is begun with “and,” demonstrating it as an increment to the declaration in 09, but this is over a full second since the end of 09, during which K has taken a turn, paused, and begun again. By positioning 11 as an increment to 09, DM demonstrates to K that there is more he needs to know before K continues. DM also employs a markedly different rhythm in 11, breaking with his own rhythm in 09 as well as K's rhythm in 10. This is one indication to K that the declaration at 11 is doing something different than the declaration at 09. The fact that it is positioned as an increment to 09 further demonstrates, although 11's declaration is different, it is still in some way contingent on the prior declaration.

While it is corrupted by laughter, it's clear that the second word K is attempting in 10 is “alright.” K is using the word in much the same way DM used “okay” in 09. As Beach (2009) has noted, “okay” can be used in this manner to display to another that one

is monitoring the other's talk and that the speaker has not noted any issues or problems with that other's talk. K's "alright" does similar work here, with the added implication that what just happened is the cause of or a contingent factor for the next action (e.g. "If that is the case, then..."). By using "alright" in 10, K is essentially pre-proposing a new course of action given the new information he has received in 09. Given this, DM's response in 11 as an increment to the previous declaration demonstrates to K that whatever course of action K might be proposing is no longer possible because of the declaration in 09, well before K can even begin to articulate the course of action. K has enough information by the "=And" in 11 to predict that DM is going to prevent him from taking further action, and in fact demonstrates this by immediately proposing his desired course of action (in general terms) at 12, overlapping with DM's attempt to self-select for another turn. In 12, K is asserting his normal right to make five full attacks against any targets in range during his turn, though in the form of a question; K has only used two of his five attacks allowed during his turn and therefore he should be allowed to direct the remaining three attacks into "the other guy." Recall that the "<And" in 11 increments 09, demonstrating to K because the Formian he was attacking has died, he will be prevented from making further attacks, neatly denying K his right-to-attack, without directly referencing that right.

In light of this disagreement, 12 can be understood not as a request for DM's permission, but as a request for justification for being denied permission. K's proposed course of action has already been prematurely rejected, so what purpose does proposing it

as a request serve? DM's utterances at 09 and 11 orient to the creature's death as preventing K from taking further action, but by proposing a further action anyway, K implicitly challenges DM's justification for prematurely denying him the right to propose a new course of action. DM orients to it as a challenge, continuing at 14 with "Well actually," a common preface to disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984). The fact that DM goes on to offer a justification indicates his orientation to 12 as a challenge to his authoritative ruling in 11.

In short, both DM and K are orienting to 11 as doing something fundamentally different than is being done in 09. In 09 and 10, K and DM match in rhythm continuing from earlier (as well as in a suppressed laughter bubbling up in the speech). We speak in short sentences, usually for only one or two TCUs. Turn-taking is accomplished with imperceptible gaps at appropriate TRPs. In 09 and 10, then, the relationship between us is interpretable as the solidarity of two friends who enjoy playing role-playing games together. That is, much like in segment (1) when K and S aligned both verbally and nonverbally over the intertextual construction of the pimp-style monk, DM and K demonstrate affiliation for each other via mirroring each other's tone and rhythm. In doing so, K and DM demonstrate the affiliative aspects of Rawlins' (1992) dialectic of the Ideal and the Real, however, these affiliative moves quickly give way in 11 to the instrumental tasks of by K and DM's respective game roles.

As above, 11 and 12 alter the relational pattern of 08, 09, and 10 as I assume my role as Dungeon Master in making a ruling in response to K's proposal to take further

action. 11 is clearly a declaration, not a request or a suggestion. Friends do not typically deliver edicts like this to each other. By responding to the declaration in 11 with a request, K is essentially orienting to DM's right to make such a declaration.

Acknowledging that right demonstrates to DM that K has oriented to the DM's game-role, further operationalized by DM's explanation in 14. 09-14 therefore evidences a dramatic shift in enacting Rawlins (1992) dialectic of the Ideal and the Real: from the ideal of affiliative expression in 09 and 10 to an orientation towards our (at this time) oppositional game-defined roles and tasks in 11 and 12.

In 14-16, I am performing not only as arbiter and interpreter, but also as storyteller. It is understood by the players that the DM is the ultimate authority on what does or does not actually “happen” in the game, and indeed nothing *can* happen unless expressly articulated by the DM as having taken place. Within the confines of the story being collaboratively crafted, the DM is *literally* omnipotent and omniscient and the players are *literally* subject to his or her whims. This is not to say that the DM is infallible and unquestionable, however, or able to act without repercussion. While K's phrasing of 12-13 as a question acknowledges DM's right and authority to declare what events actually transpire, he is doing so only within what I as DM can logically justify.

With respect to the game, then, what I have essentially done in exercising my authority in my ruling in 15-16 is to declare that, because K's character would have no idea whether or not the creature he is attacking in total darkness had been slain (or indeed if he even hit), he would probably keep on attacking in the same direction just to be sure.

In doing so, I essentially take control of K's character, forcing him to attempt to hit M, based on what information I believe K's character would reasonably have access to.⁷

3.5 Dude, I'm Dead!

(3) dndrecord.mp3 01:16:53

01 A Dude. That'll [teach you to roll up (and do a)]
 02 K [So::.. (.) I- uh]
 03 K I'm rolling against his armor class?⁸
 04 A =Can't [play with the big dawgs!]
 05 DM [yeah, hope he roll-⁹ if he- hope] he rolls a one,¹⁰ dude.
 06 (.6)
 07 K Yah. Orwell. Okay.
 08 (1.0) ((dice roll))
 09 A How much health? Do you have right now, M[att?]
 10 K [No] I hit.=
 11 DM =Y[ou are slashing] in the dark.
 12 M [Ahunnerd and forty three.]
 13 (.5) ((dice roll))
 14 K Yeah, I am. I hit.

⁷ The problem I am addressing here as DM is a tension between player knowledge and what information the player's character would reasonably have access to within the confines of the story being crafted. Because one character can see in the dark, all players become informed about events that are transpiring, but their respective character's do not necessarily have access to that knowledge. Using information that your character would not actually have access to is severely frowned upon in the game, referred to officially as "meta-gaming."

⁸ All creatures and objects in the game are assigned an Armor Class, or AC. This value represents the relative difficulty of actually hitting, grabbing, cutting, or in some other way directly and physically interacting with that object in a meaningful way. In this context, M's armor class represents how difficult it is for K to hit him.

⁹ What DM is referring to here by "roll" is the roll of the twenty-sided die (or d20) as part of the formula for determining the success of an attack. This works in the following manner: the attacking creature or player rolls a d20, adds his/her/its attack bonus for that attack, and then compares the result to the target's AC (see footnote 7). If the result is higher than the target's AC, then the attack is successful. If not, the attack misses or is otherwise harmlessly deflected. Players manipulate their chances at success by finding various means to either increase their attack bonus (through magic, items, abilities, and various situational modifiers granted by the DM) or reduce the target's AC (through similar means). This formula represents the core mechanic of the Dungeons & Dragons System, and nearly all actions are determined by some variation on this formula. It keeps at its center an element of randomness in the roll of the d20, but players still have at their disposal a vast array of means to skew the probabilities in their favor (I as DM have potentially even greater means to skew the probabilities against them).

¹⁰ Rolling a one during an attack is termed a critical fail and constitutes an automatic miss.

15 (3.0) ((dice roll))
 16 K Yeah I [hit.]
 17 A [Hit.]
 18 DM Al^right.
 19 K So.
 20 K [Matt.]
 21 DM [Roll ^DA]mage!¹¹
 22 K You take (.5) *oh man.* .hhh
 23 A [Ma::n.]
 24 K [You take] fifty three damage, forty six, and forty seven.
 25 K So[o::]
 26 M [>Du]de, I'm< DEad(?)

In segment (3), the group is negotiating the results of K's subsequent attacks against M, following the first two attacks that killed the Formian creature. The group does this largely without facilitation from DM. While the mechanics of the actions performed here are relatively straightforward (see footnotes 7-10), player reaction to these more-or-less random events is quite complex as each person takes up and adds their take on what is the most likely result from two dichotomous probabilities.

To begin, the business of the dice rolling is first resolved. K marks the transition to this new course of action with his so-prefaced upshot in 02 and 03, one of the standard uses of so noted by Raymond (2004) discussed earlier. Each of the attacks K makes has a 95% chance of success and their result should come as no surprise, a fact I make clear in 05 with my comment to M of “Hope he rolls a one,” which in the circumstances is his only option to avoid getting hit. K approaches the rolling of the die with “oh well” in 07,

¹¹ Damage, or the actual number of hit points deducted as the result of a successful attack, is calculated by yet another formula. A given number and type of dice (which can greatly vary from one character to the next, depending on the type of attack, the weapon used, ability scores, and various other bonuses and modifiers) is rolled and added together to determine total damage dealt.

and a slight delay in actually rolling it. Apparently voicing a sense of trepidation in 09, A asks M for the number of health points he has (see footnote 5). Given the high probability K's attacks will be successful, A's question can be seen to be an attempt to determine the likelihood that M will be killed by K's attacks.

Each turn in 03-17 is fairly distinct, with significant delays between turns as K determines the results of his rolls. Here, K seems to clearly have “the floor,” with only A engaging in some partial overlap as he mirrors K's word choice in 17 and 23. In 21, I order K to “roll damage,” but evidently K had done so already,¹² hence it should be obvious to participants that K's “you take” in 22 is indexing his imminent announcement of the total damage M will receive. Rather than go ahead and announce his previously determined damage totals, K interrupts himself in 22 with “Oh man.”

Recall that the attacks K is making against M are accidental in nature in that K does not intend to be attacking M, let alone causing his demise. This is also M's first session with the group, and in particular, this is his first time participating in combat. In fact, in terms of the chronology of the story being collaboratively constructed, M's character was only introduced to the group immediately prior to this incident, charging in to aid the group when his character spotted their battle. The other players are aware of these factors, as they attend to the results of K's attacks. Consider these events, then, in terms of the tensions inherent in the dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness.

Rawlins (1992) notes that “developing and maintaining a friendship

¹² It was not uncommon for this group of players to calculate damage totals and other key dice rolls ahead of time in order to speed up the often time-consuming process of negotiating combat.

conversationally involves revealing personal thoughts and feelings and *commenting on the messages and actions of one's friend*, in short, expressiveness” (emphasis added) (p. 22). In other words, a crucial component of friendship is displaying one's orientation to their friend's actions, much as K's boisterous performance of the pimp-monk in 16 of segment (1) demonstrated to S that K appreciated S's contribution. In segment (3), A is doing something similar here in 01 and 04, but rather than an expression of appreciation, he is expressing an assessment of M's actions in an amused and mocking tone, suggesting in his unfinished utterance in 01 that M's actions were poorly planned and in 04 in particular that M is outclassed by the other characters. This is rather strong criticism, considering this is M's first battle with this particular group, but notice the shift that follows. A has barely begun 04 when I overlap with M's one hope for survival, i.e. K rolling a one (see footnote 9). In doing so, DM simultaneously orients to the dire-ness of M's situation, as well as reminds M of his one (albeit small) chance of survival, an element of protectiveness. While friends expect each other to be open and honest in expressing themselves, this expectation is in dialectical tension with the equally important concerns of protecting friends, given their personal vulnerability and sensitivity. DM's utterance in 05 marks a shift in emphasis to the protectiveness aspect of the dialectic that subsequently gets taken up by K, B, and even A. Specifically, K, in 07, follows up after a short pause with three minimal TCUs, with micro-pauses between each. First, K provides some minimal agreement, though with whom is unclear as there are at least two open issues available for agreement (“can't play with the big dogs” and

“roll a one”). K's next TCU can be heard as a corrupted “Oh well,” which seems to function here both as acknowledgment and acceptance of a state of affairs that is nevertheless regrettable. It further displays an orientation to the inevitable outcome of the attacks. His subsequent and slightly elongated “okay” in 07 has the same tone and rhythm as his “oh well” and seems to express hesitation and regret about the action being currently undertaken, as in “now I am doing the action that will likely have negative consequences.” His announcement of the result of the action in 10 further demonstrates the regret. In essence, “No, I hit” answers the unspoken question about the result of his die roll: did you hit or did you miss? By adding “no,” K orients to his successful attack as a negative result. In this manner, K enacts protectiveness for M, expressing his concern for how these events affect him. K deliver 10 in partial overlap with A's utterance in 09, asking M about his character's total remaining HP.¹³ As in K's utterance in 10, A's request can also be seen as an expression of concern for the likelihood of M's character dying from these events, especially given the emphasis on “have,” suggesting an implicit question of “do you have enough health to survive these attacks?” Unlike A's earlier utterances in 01 and 04 which seem directed to the group at large, this question is tagged specifically for M and is free of the earlier explicit evaluation and criticism.

DM's announcement in 11 is somewhat curious as its relevance is not immediately

¹³ This group of players frequently do not make a distinction in their talk between a player's character and the player themselves. This is not true of all Dungeons & Dragons groups: I have known other groups to engage in quite strict usage of character names and insist on the use of specific referents to avoid conflating character and player, announcing when one is “in” or “out of character.” This group is more fluid in their enactment of these differing organizing frameworks, rarely announcing shifts between and frequently combining them.

apparent. It is well-established at this point that K is rolling his die to determine the success of his attacks, especially given K's immediately preceding confirmation of a hit. Just prior to this segment, the group had finished determining that K's attacks would not *automatically* miss the target due to the magical darkness,¹⁴ so this is not new information and K's minimal confirmation in the first TCU of 14 confirms what is, at this point, old news. DM's 11 is delivered in an almost sing-song fashion with its alternating strong and soft use of emphasis. What DM seems to be orienting to here is a key role of the dungeon master, that of providing a narrative of events as they take place, commonly termed “flavor-texting.” One possible explanation is that by engaging in a performance such as this, DM is displaying his own orientation towards the action, but rather than a display of regret it functions as a display of appreciation and enjoyment.¹⁵ Thus, despite others moves towards protectiveness, the DM gives voice to expressiveness, which continues with his enthusiastic command to roll damage in 21.

The protectiveness pole of the dialectic comes to the foreground again in 22, however, as K utters “You take (.5) oh man .hh” K has actually already “rolled damage” in advance, and starts to announce the total, but then stops, pauses, utters “oh man” and

¹⁴ Before K was allowed to actually attempt his three attacks administered by the roll of a d20 three times in 07-15, he first had to overcome a darkness check for each attack. Recall that M had cast the battlefield into a magical darkness through which only he could see, which, in terms of the game rules and actions, forced all other players and creatures to have to first succeed on the flip of a coin before being allowed to actually attempt an attack. Failing the coin flip constituted an automatic miss, and therefore the player/creature would not be allowed to roll at all.

¹⁵ The DM role is quite explicitly an antagonistic one with the players: it is literally my job to do everything I can to try and murder every last one of the player characters, as long as I can justify my actions within the confines of the rules and the logical coherency of the constructed story. Otherwise, it wouldn't be any fun.

inhales. K's insertion of "oh man" in place of stating the damage totals can be seen to be an expression on K's part of what he believes are the implications of those numbers, namely, the unfortunate death of M's character. This is especially evident given the dramatically whispered (but still clearly audible) delivery. A goes on to mirror this orientation, repeating K's use of "man" as K begins to announce the actual totals.

Starting with the pause at 06 and carrying through to 23, each utterance is distinct, each word clearly enunciated, even in overlap with significant pauses as K makes each roll of the die. The three-second pause in 15 as K makes his final roll is followed by K's use of the standalone-so in 19 to draw attention to the ultimate upshot, namely that M's character is about to take some serious damage. These practices display participant orientation towards the actions being negotiated as potentially threatening, not just to M's character, but to M himself, and that this negotiation therefore requires delicate and deliberate handling. In these ways, the players enact protectiveness towards M. This stands in marked contrast to what follows next as yet another dramatic shift in the dialectic takes place.

24 K	You take <u>fifty</u> <u>three</u> <u>damage</u> , forty <u>six</u> , and forty seven.
25 K	So[o:..]
26 M	[>Du]de, I'm< <u>DEad</u> (?)
27 A	*gzhaHAHAHA::.. hhhh
28 (B)	No(?) the [thing=]
29 A	[AH:::: HA::::..]
30 K	[=that's- that's like a hun]dred
31 K	and fifty damage.=
32 M	=Yeah
33 B	<u>Bran</u> [don.]
34 K	[<u>BLULA</u>] <u>LALOAR</u>
35 K	<u>Aha</u> [hahuha.] [a^huhuhuha::]

36 B [Did he hit] all three [times when he flipped the coin?]=¹⁶
 37 ((Clap)) ((clap)) ((clap)) ((clap))
 38 DM =Yeah.=
 39 A =brA:::[vɔ.=]
 40 K [^hehehe]
 41 M [=*Grea]t.
 42 K *m'SOrry dawg, I'll bring you ba:ck=
 43 M =^ha[ha]ha=
 44 K [I-] =I'll bbehring you b[ahahack]
 45 M [^^ahahaHAHA hhh^^]
 46 A [I'M IN TOWN]
 47 A and I'm LAUGHin MY: ASS [off.=]
 48 M [Bwuha][hehehehe]
 49 B [=Ow.]
 50 K [=Awww ma]::n.
 51 M Hahaha.
 52 DM Alright.=
 53 K =At least the darkness goes away, righ[teheh?]
 54 DM [Yeah]
 55 DM yeah it actually does.

K's standalone-so in 25 is used to “prompt that recipient to acknowledge the action import of that prior talk for that larger course of action by performing a/the sequence operation it makes relevant” (Raymond, 2004, p. 196). M orients to this prompt in overlap with his announcement of his own demise: “Dude, I'm dead!” The first and loudest reaction to M is from A, in the form of high, nasal laughter, with the final “ha” held and extended. It is marked for the other participants, both its tone and the forced stretching of the sound in both 27, and in particular 29, indicating that this laugh is not spontaneous but intentional. This quality of intentionality suggests not just amusement, but a *performance* of amusement, giving this laughter an element of *schadenfreude*; it

¹⁶ Before K was allowed to make his attack roll (see footnote 8), he first had to overcome a darkness check for each attack

should be clear to participants that this is A laughing at M's misfortune, that this is a laugh of derision and mockery. A is *expressing* his orientation to M's death as hilarious.

A goes on to deliver a “slow clap” at 37, a deliberately paced clap frequently associated with irony and sarcasm, followed by “BrA...vo.” in 39. Again, these follow similar patterns of affected emphasis, but these actions have the added complication of being totally out of place. Things like applause and in particular the term “Bravo” invoke a very specific context of theatre and acting. A's intertextual use of these practices is incongruous with the negotiated context and clearly not indicative of the patterns of practice in this Dungeons and Dragons group, and thus its use here can be seen as “the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite” (Sidnell, 2010, p. 70), i.e., irony. A's clapping and “bravo” are thus further enactments of expressiveness: this mock-praise is not cheering another's success, it is a statement of being impressed by another's failure.

In 46 and 47, A continues his expressiveness. A's character is actually located in the adventurer's city of Starfall that served as the central hub for the party, not with the other players mired in combat, and precisely because of that, his *character* does not actually have any idea of what has been happening. The humor here seems to come out of the combination of multiple organizing frameworks, in this case A's own orientation as a player, A's character's orientation to events, and A's explicit recognition of his responses as a player to the misfortunes of M's character.¹⁷

¹⁷ Curiously, A's earlier utterances (starting from 27 onward), while clearly expressing an orientation

Apart from A's responses, K offers in 30 and 31 a new account of the same information he announced in 24, this time though with less specificity, just giving an answer rounded to the nearest base-10 number. Why not give the exact total? Why repeat it at all? K could be suggesting that others should recognize 150 as more than the total HP for the vast majority of the characters. K then pauses very briefly here (filled neatly by M's "yeah") before shouting out a string of gibberish. As I recall, at the time he made slashing/jabbing motions with his fist in time with the syllables in his roar.¹⁸ The hand gestures and the preceding reference to the power of his attacks make it clear that K is personifying his character in the act of delivering his fearsome attack. By first drawing attention to the high value of his attacks, K may be citing evidence which provides the justification for his high-volume outburst. Clearly, he seems to suggest that such a powerful attack requires a terrible war-cry. K's performance can be understood as enacting Expressiveness, although it seems to attend more to his own character at the expense of M's, mirroring some of the elements of A's taunting back in 01 and 03, "can't play with the big dogs." By performing the murder of M's character, K draws attention to the exact way in which his character is superior, a kind of self-aggrandizing display, dis-

about what has *happened to* M (and therefore a certain amount of evaluation and criticism *of* M), are not clearly *directed towards* M and do not receive any feedback from M or anyone else. This lack of uptake does not seem to trouble A or discourage him from going on to make further evaluations known. A seems to deliver these evaluations to the group as a whole rather than any one particular individual. In contrast, others actually seem to directly respond to the humorous 47, with M and K following with laughter. From this, it seems there may be a certain amount of greater allowance in multi-party talk for unspecified recipients in cases of evaluations presented to the group as a whole, as well as greater allowance for reduced explicit uptake from recipients at large in response to such expressions made available group-wide.

¹⁸ K's character uses a specialized weapon, gloves fitted with long thin blades, not unlike Wolverine of the X-Men or Vega from the Street Fighter games. He's able to attack at range like he does because of a spell, Blood Wind, which allows him to perform his melee attacks against targets within twenty-five feet as a physical extension of will.

aligning from M. This expression of competition and separateness thus gives voice to the Real in contradiction with the Ideal, as well as the Instrumental benefit it serves him at the expense of Affection for M.

For his part, B attempts to direct my attention to a problem he has noted, but has some trouble getting a word in amidst the high-volume reactions. He enters at 28 with a direct objection in response to M declaring his death. Even with just “No the thing,” we can tell that B has an objection, that it is likely an objection to M's death given its recent announcement, and that he has a reason or evidence for the objection, but before he can articulate what that might be he is sonically drowned out by A's forced laugh. He tries again in 33, this time with a direct summons to me before K's loud outburst dominates. Finally, with K laughing at a more normal volume in the background, B manages to state his concern in 36: what about those darkness checks we did earlier? I confirm that the checks were all made successfully with a simple “yeah,” inflected strangely due to suppressed laughter, and I take it from B's not then selecting a new turn that he has accepted, or at least does not object to, that ruling. By briefly re-opening the darkness issue in 37, and specifically by re-opening it subsequent to his expression of objection in 28, B attempts to suggest a way M's character may be saved, giving voice to Protectiveness amidst K and A's moves towards evaluative, ironic, and self-aggrandizing Expressiveness.

What, then, of M's own reaction? Aside from his initial revelation of his death in 26, it is several turns before M makes any verbal expression of his orientation to his own

grisly end. This might seem strange, given that M is the most directly and most negatively affected by the events. On closer inspection, however, M's delay in giving comment may be because he already has commented with 26. What does "Dude, I'm dead!" demonstrate to participants in regards to M's orientation to his death? On its own, this is rather difficult to say, but look carefully at what follows. K and A in particular orient to M's death as really funny. K emphasizes the power of his character and the ease with which he cuts M down, while A does not seem to have much problem with directly and openly laughing at M's expense. When M finally comes back with "Great," in 41, the evident irony seems to be reflection of the irony and wry amusement that has marked K's and A's utterances. M more than likely does not regard his character's death as a positive turn of events, but that does not preclude M, as a player, from expressing amusement about the unexpected turn of events, and it is not long before M's laughter joins the others.

In 42, K recognizes and orients to M's "great" not as sincere but as sarcasm, apologizing and offering to "bring you back," referring to a magic rod he possesses which can revive one person from the dead once per day. At the same time, K also expresses amusement, with some odd inflections rising up as K attempts to control his laughter. M responds with laughter as K tries in 44 to repeat 42, but this time with even more laughter corrupting his utterance. M overlaps with K at the end of 44 with further extended and pronounced laughter, and does so once more with A at the end of 47. M's laughter in 47 subsequent to A's cross-frame humor seems to be a direct appreciation of

A's joke, but his laughter at 43 and 45 is slightly more difficult to parse. Sequential placement would suggest that in 43 M is laughing at K's apology, but this verbal act is undercut by K's own laughter bubbling up as he apologizes a second time. M's responding laughter, then, seems to not be in acknowledgment of the apology, but rather a mirroring of K's literally irrepressible amusement. Through his use of laughter, then, M enacts the affiliative/ideal of the Ideal and Real dialectic, demonstrating his connection with both K and A. This enables others in the group to discern M's actual evaluation of his character's death, giving rise to Expressiveness: M, like K and A, finds the circumstances of his own character's death to be very funny indeed.

The talk in section (3) cannot be understood fully without regard to these relational phenomena. Expressions of the dialectic of the Ideal and the Real intersecting with those of the dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness in this small instance of friending. K and A, in their deliberate and controlled utterances in the first half demonstrate protectiveness for M over a potentially sensitive topic. K and A, through the performance of jokes and character reactions in the latter half, engage in indirect self-disclosing of evaluations, criticisms and schadenfreude that enact Expressiveness, but specifically expressiveness of separateness, or the individualistic qualities of the Real. Lastly, M's laughter provides his own expressiveness and again invokes affiliation.

3.6 *Fight or Flight*

The dialectics of friendship also seem to express in the following segment of talk taken from an hour later in the recording. Prior to this segment, the party had been informed that they are being ambushed by a race of automatons known as The Inevitables. These creatures, constructed of silver, gold, and platinum, are an extremely lawful¹⁹ race of sentient machines, each of which has been designed and programmed to be a caretaker for a specific “law,” which might include legal issues like “no trespassing,” but also more abstract concepts like the normal passage of time and other physical laws that govern the function of the universe. K, S, and DM had multiple encounters with these creatures during the previous campaign, tending to appear out of nowhere and ambush our group at unexpected junctures; it seems that, given our party's heavy use of

¹⁹ All characters and creatures in Dungeons and Dragons have a given “alignment” which expresses key aspects of that character or creature's nature, expressed by reference to two intersecting continua. The first of these is Law and Chaos. Lawfulness here refers to a tendency in the creature/character to obey rules and respect for institutional authority. These individuals would tend to hold a strict code of behavior and to adhere to certain key principles, tending to value the whole over the individual. These types of behaviors lie in tension with Chaos, which emphasizes anarchy and individual autonomy. The second continua describes basic morality in the form of Good and Evil, with Good creatures exhibiting selfless and heroic qualities, while Evil creatures focus primarily on their own self-interest, often at the expense of others. All creatures and characters are given a shorthand notation that symbolizes this moral and behavioral compass, indicating where they stand on each of the continua. The above-mentioned Inevitables, for instance, are considered Lawful/Neutral: their primary concern is for the adherence to law, but do not make judgments about the relative morality of such laws. K's monk is Lawful/Good, living a disciplined life, helping those in need and seeking to right wrongs, but then having absolutely no qualms about horribly murdering wrong-doers.

Characters and creatures are required to adhere to their given alignment. Repeatedly failing to do so may lead the DM to declare that the character has shifted alignment, and for some character classes (such as monks and paladins) this can lead to significant repercussions in the form of denied access to key class-specific abilities. K's destructive and chaotic tendencies as a player, for instance, could have led to the loss of many of his monk skills, forcing him to not infrequently have to justify his actions in light of his alignment, and indeed it was one of my agenda's as DM to do what I could to encourage K to become more chaotic that I might then have an excuse to take away some of his monk abilities and thereby cripple him somewhat.

magic to manipulate time, cheat death, and alter reality for our own benefit, we had come to be seen by these Inevitables as such a highly chaotic force that they now felt it necessary to police and punish us for the disorder and messiness we sowed in the fundamental operation of the universe.

As a result of this continued harassment, one of the first things the party tried to accomplish in our new campaign was to find the Inevitables and bring the fight to them. In due course, they discovered an ancient and massive library/fortress, heavily defended by the Inevitables, but the party found that, for reasons that will become clear later, these Inevitable guards took little interest in them and allowed the party access to the library without complaint. It is only now, as the party leaves the library, that they are being attacked in a large ambush. Section (4) picks up as the players each demonstrate their orientation to the ambush while DM begins to prepare for another combat sequence, determining at this stage the order in which characters and creatures will take their turns.²⁰

(4)	dndrecord.mp3	2:20:59
01 Bf	Let <u>him</u> do his own shit, he's the one who's got beef.	
02 (1.5)		
03 Bf	I mean era why're we here=	
04 B	=Fine=	
05 K	=Thanks, man=	
06 A	=[^huh heh^]	
07 K	[yeah.]	
08 K	>You have a< <u>great</u> (.) <u>day</u> .	

²⁰ This process is known as determining “initiative,” calculated for each creature by the following formula: the roll of a d20 plus that creature's dexterity bonus. Each creature and character has 6 key statistics that describe its abilities, one of which is dexterity, or “dex” for short.

09 mult [*((overlapping laughter – Bf, S, M, A))*]
 10 B [Hey (.) When] you're doing
 11 B initiative? is it just the number on the dice? [af add] to::.
 12 DM [Dex.]
 13 DM It's the Dee tw[enty:: plus d]ex.
 14 K [you add dex]
 15 B Dex? Oh kay. >So I got<
 16 (2.0)
 17 B [Mmm:::] (.) Tw[enny-two.]
 18 M [^Um.] (.) [I don't real]ly care I mean
 19 M these guys are following the law and I'm lawful=
 20 B =I got a twenny-two on my initiative.
 21 M Butuh:: (.) if you don't like [em]
 22 Bf [I got] seventeen=
 23 M =Fuck 'em.
 24 mult [((snort from two))]
 25 K [Thanks Matt.]
 26 M ^^eh heh heh^^=
 27 A =yeah butchoo gotta [careful-]
 28 K [coo::l] homie.

First, in 01 Bf draws attention to the fact that this altercation is part of a long-standing open argument or “beef” between the Inevitables and a few members of the party (K, S, and DM).²¹ Bf's reference to “him,” therefore, is somewhat unclear but is likely a reference to K specifically, as it was K's agenda to find the Inevitables and his decision to make the journey to this region. Now, there is generally a strong preference in-game for working together as a group, given that each character class only has a limited range of abilities and therefore cooperative action is not just preferred but occasionally necessary in order to progress in the story. Given this strong preference for

²¹ In addition to my role as DM, I also maintained a player character, a powerful elf wizard named Threllis, who would aid the party in battle and other areas where his magics would come in handy. Like K and S, I had invested a lot of time and effort into this character and did not want to toss him aside even as I assumed the position of DM.

collaboration, Bf's declaration recognizes both his and K's autonomy. Given this display of separateness, B's direct acceptance at 04 of Bf's right to make this choice and K's utterances at 05 and 08 can be heard as sarcasm. Bf has the right to exercise his freedom to be Independent, but by drawing attention to this right in a sarcastic manner K also gives voice to the contradictory expectations of mutual support and availability of the Independence/Dependence dialectic. B shifts the context back to game-play concerns in 11, requesting game-rule information concerning the formula for determining initiative, to which both DM and K respond to with the needed information.

As B makes known his total initiative score in 17, M overlaps in 18 with an utterance that is clearly not relevant to the business of determining initiative and thus must be attending to some other still-open issue, in this case why other party members should or should not aid K. "These guys" in 19 seems to refer to the Lawful-Neutral Inevitables. M's character, who shares the same game-alignment with the Inevitables, should probably "not care" about this battle as they are executing the law and M's character is also lawful in nature, suggesting mild agreement with Bf about not offering his aid to K and others. In 21, however, M follows this up first with "but," marking the utterance as containing information that will somehow oppose, contradict, or negate his previous assertions. The subsequent "if" marks the new contribution as a conditional assertion that, when invoked, will contradict or override his previous game-alignment assertions. Thus, M positions K's orientation to the Inevitables as a key factor in M's decision-making, carrying such significance for M that it would discount the

consideration of M's character's game-alignment as relevant, and therefore M as a character would not have problems with aiding K and fighting the Inevitables. Given his language-choice and emphasis in 23, his actual position towards fighting the Inevitables seems to be one of determined and enthusiastic aggression. K expresses his appreciation directly in 25 and furthers the aligning moves M began by calling M “homie,” another hip-hop textual reference that generally refers to one's “home boys,” or those who can be counted on to support oneself. K uses the appellation to directly show appreciation for M's pledged support, and in this manner acknowledges and accepts with gratitude K and M's established (inter)Dependence.

27 A =yeah butchoo gotta [careful-]
28 K [coo::l] homie.
29 A You gotta be careful with <doing that>.
30 M M[mhm.]
31 A [you're] gonna lose all you're paladin skills and sheit.
32 M I'm- [I'm] lawful neutral.
33 A [>so if y-<]
34 (.5)
35 B Yeah, [but-] if you're lawful.
36 A [uh]
37 A Yeah.
38 K So but you're protecting yourself.
39 M Yeah but, our party is-
40 A Yea:h. [As long as-]
41 M [gettin fucked] up by these guys, so:: fuck 'em.
42 K [Fuckem.]
43 M [.hh*^^ehhehehehe^^*]
44 K They're attackin us. *Eh huh huh*=
45 Bf ='s true.

A inserts his own “but” in 27, orienting towards M's rationale for supporting K as problematic in some way, and then refers in general terms to the source of trouble in 29

with “doing that,” and therefore warranting caution. A is suggesting here that contradicting one's alignment precisely as M has proposed in 18-23 may have consequences that M should bare in mind. A further evidences the need for care by elaborating on just what those consequences might be in 31.²² Here, A enacts multiple intersecting dialectics. First, A warns M in 27, 29, and 31 that disregarding his alignment as he has proposed to do has serious consequences, levying (or Expressing) a criticism (or Judgment) against M's decision as poorly thought-out. Making such a criticism also denies M's autonomy, that is, by questioning M's decisions about himself, A denies M's freedom to be Independent. Interestingly, this particular denial of independence through critique seems to be done out of regard for the consequences M may face, an expression of concern and thus attending to the Ideals of friendship.

In 30, M acknowledges A's utterance, overlapped by A self-selecting to expand on the potential worrisome consequences of M's actions, but M then goes on to make an assertion in 32, overtalking A's unfinished so-prefaced upshot at 33. M's assertion of his full alignment (not just lawful, but lawful-neutral), given its placement subsequent to A's warning, displays to A M's orientation that M's alignment as neutral on the Good-Evil continua addresses A's concern. B's initial minimal confirmation of “yeah” at 35 acknowledges the new information supplied by M and then discounts it with his “but,” further articulated by the conditional statement “if you're lawful.” Here, B has specified a

²² As a paladin, M's character's gains a number of key abilities (such as creating magical darkness as noted in segments (2) and (3)) based on his strict observance of the teachings and edicts of his fictional god. Paladins must remain lawful in order to continue using their god-granted abilities.

condition, though not the upshot of its fulfillment. Participants can infer, given the condition of lawfulness, that B's unspoken upshot is the negative consequence of failing to be lawful which A has already drawn attention to. Thus, B asserts that being lawful at all, even if it is lawful-neutral, is not an adequate excuse for M contradicting his own alignment, a position that A agrees with in 37. B also denies M's autonomy via an expressed judgment, but by discounting M's reasoning B is simultaneously agreeing with A and indirectly expressing a concern for M. Thus, B and A's warnings and criticisms can be understood as Expressiveness of Judgment, denying Independence in the process of attending to Ideals of friendship.

K's "so but" in 38 takes these moves in a different direction, the slight questioning "so" in particular displaying his orientation to the previous assertions as factual, but challenging them on grounds of relevancy. His but-prefaced statement that follows can then be seen as additional information that discounts B and A's concerns. M follows this up in 39 with yet another "Yeah, but." Sequential placement might indicate 39 to be in response to K's observation, but this seems incongruous considering K seems to be supporting M's position here. It should be obvious to participants that M is not objecting to his own position and therefore likely is not objecting to K's support, so 39 is likely addressing the opposing stance held by B and A. While it is not entirely clear by itself what it is about "our party" that justifies M's new objection, participants can likely infer, given its subsequent placement to K's observation regarding protecting oneself, that M is taking up K's contribution here to justify his alignment-breaking decision, referring

specifically here to protecting the party. It can be seen then that A's new and elongated use of “yeah” in 40, especially given the subsequent micro-pause, is not simply a token of information receipt, but rather an indication of his change-of-state towards true agreement, finally accepting this new justification for the alignment-violation “as long as” one is protecting oneself or one's party. M fully articulates and clarifies his position in 41, with A dropping his own attempt to articulate the justification as M completes 39, essentially restating a more nuanced version of 21 and 23 by incorporating K's self-preservation observation in 38, thus attending to and dismissing the problematic alignment-violation, having now satisfied the concerns of his fellow players. K, in 42, goes on to mirror M's now repeated use of the phrase “fuck 'em,” displaying further agreement as M overlaps with laughter in 43. K continues these aligning moves, restating his previously supplied observation/justification and supplementing it with laughter. Thus, in 38-44, the conversation shifts in dialectical polarity as K aligns with M's position, Expressing Ideals of mutual support with M, validating M's position in a show of Acceptance, which in turn honors M's autonomy and freedom to be Independent, as well as implicitly attending to the Instrumental benefit he gains by M's aid.

In 45, Bf asserts that something is true, likely K's now repeated assertion that the Inevitables are attacking the party. This observation is his only real contribution to the justification of the alignment-breaking behavior, and it does not seem that M's decision-making is truly what he is attending to with 45. The emphasis on “true” seems to mark Bf's assertion as a change of state, but given his lack of participation in the matters

negotiated in 18-44, it seems to be indicating a change-of-state about something other than M's strict observation of alignment. Recall the reason M is breaking with his alignment in the first place: M, in justifying his alignment-break, is addressing the issue Bf originally introduced in 01 concerning the broader question of aiding K. Bf, with his change-of-state token in 45, acknowledges and accepts the self-defense justification as a legitimate reason to aid K, thus answering (and therefore closing) his request for reasons to aid K with K's "beef" with the Inevitables. In segment (4), then, we see the group orient to the issue of whether or not to aid K in the fight against the Inevitables. Bf positions it as negotiable and effectively opens the issue by noting the the dispute is between K and the Inevitables and therefore not necessarily with the party as a whole. M subsequently submits his own justification for aiding K. After some disagreement about the wisdom of a character violating its own alignment proffered primarily by A, M successfully defends his position with K's help, justifying the alignment-violation in light of the need for self-preservation and the protection of the party, a justification which Bf orients to (given his change-of-state token) as attending to why the party as a whole (and therefore why he) should aid K.

3.7 Self-Preservation

(5) dndrecord.mp3 2:23:05

01 Bf [You bet]ter be fuckin::

02 DM [Uh.]

03 Bf nimble jack quick [and all that great] stuff.=

04 M [nmnhe ((snort))]

05 K =I am.=

06 Bf =alright=

07 DM =We're gonna have two (.) um.
 08 Bf 'M not going down [**for anybody**]
 09 DM [*Maruts?*²³] =
 10 K =*oh .hh hu f: [guh*]
 11 M [haHAHA huh]
 12 M I'm not going do[wn for you:], [or any:body::]
 13 K [huh huh gu-] [or any:body::] =
 14 DM =These maruts themselves are actually u::m
 15 (2.0)
 16 DM ^Are they huge?²⁴
 17 (1.0)
 18 DM As well?
 19 M *^^hee ha ha ha^^*=

Section (5) picks up after DM has already spent some time arranging²⁵ a large number of enemies of various sizes. Bf opens the segment with a directive that someone (evidently K) be “nimble jack quick,” another reference to an external text, this time the well-known nursery rhyme. M overlaps with laughter in 04, followed by K's assertion in 05 that he is indeed “all that great stuff,” which Bf minimally confirms in 06 with “alright.” While DM continues to announce yet more enemies in 07 and 09, Bf makes the declaration in 08 that he will not be “going down,” or killed, “for anybody.” Recall from the previous segment that Bf has been less-than-forthcoming with his proffering of aid. 01, 03, and 08 reiterates his self-preservation standpoint, with 08 in particular making clear that the reason K needs to be “nimble jack quick” is because Bf is not willing to die

²³ A type of Inevitable.

²⁴ In *Dungeons and Dragons*, creatures and objects are assigned size categories, tiny, small, medium, large, huge, gigantic, and colossal. Different size categories get different arrays of bonuses, for instance larger creatures take penalties in their dexterity, but gain bonus to natural armor (improving their Armor Class) as well as HP.

²⁵ In order to aid the negotiation of combat, this group typically made use of a “battle map,” a large vinyl grid, each square representing five square feet. Various dice, coins, and other small items are used to represent characters, enemies, and other creatures while crude sketches with dry-erase markers are used to mark out structures and terrain.

here for K or anyone else. In light of 08, then, 01 and 03 can be heard as a warning: K's character "had better be" as good as K frequently asserts, as Bf will not be there to back him or anyone else up if things go poorly. K and M respond to Bf's declaration of self-preservation with overlapping laughter in 10 and 11 before M restates the declaration with exaggerated tone and language in 12. Interestingly, K predicts the end of M's utterance here and comes in for a collaborative completion of "or anybody" at 13. By collaboratively restating 08 in this affected manner, K and M co-opt Bf's contribution for a different purpose. In many ways, this style of delivery seems to mirror the performative aspects of K's "pimp slap" (segment 1, line 16), ferocious roaring (segment 3, line 34), and A's "I'M IN TOWN" (segment 3, line 46 and 47), yet where those were enactments of their respective character's orientation to events, M and K's collaboration here seems to be an enactment of Bf's character, performed in place of Bf. In 01-13, then, we see first Bf clearly disaligning with his conditional aid, demonstrating his freedom to make Independent decisions for his character. In so doing, Bf is contradicting the normative Ideal of mutual support unless K can provide a key Instrumental benefit. K and M's laughter in response to 08 and the subsequent collaborative exaggerated restatement equally orients to Bf's moves towards Independence, though not necessarily as explicitly negative. K and M take it up as a humorous episode, giving voice to Expressiveness, but the exact nature of that expressiveness warrants some further examination. Although the sarcasm of 12 and 13 does indeed levy a Judgment against Bf's self-serving behavior, the ridicule here does not explicitly condemn the behavior. By displaying their uptake of Bf's

declaration of self-preservation as amusement, K and M are simultaneously expressing

Acceptance of Bf.

3.8 Kill 'em All

20 DM =I think they're huge as well.
 21 (.5)
 22 K Iz'is a random encounter²⁶ you just=
 23 DM =Oh no
 24 (.)
 25 DM I came up with this on my own.
 26 K Oh::: [He huh huh]
 27 M [He ha]
 28 DM Basic'ly the inevitable guarrry? (.) Still told.
 29 (.)
 30 DM the other inevitables that you were here.
 31 (.)
 32 DM [The ones that] guard time.
 33 (?) [((unclear))]
 34 (.5)
 35 DM ^HE^ didn't have any problems with you being here,
 36 DM That wasn't his law to guard, >but he< told the ones
 37 DM >who id it< was their job was wha'it was.
 38 A They're like oh, thanks, buddy.
 39 (.5)
 40 K [.hhhhh **hoo::: **] [.hhhh]
 41 Bf [I'm takin the elevator back. up] (.) [that's what Im doin.]
 42 A [I'm in tow::n.]
 43 K [**hoo::: **]
 44 DM [*it's not (going to do that)*]=
 45 Bf =Gaw::d dammit.
 46 K **Ghod** I am gonna kill, every (.) **last** (.)
 47 K one of em I see now
 48 K [th're **fuck it**]
 49 DM [er hnn hm]
 50 K >I was gonna< >LEAVE IT ALONE<
 51 K >I was gonna< >LEAVE IT ALONE<

²⁶ The various source-books associated with Dungeons and Dragons have a number of probability tables with various scenarios, characters, enemies, and treasure which can be used to quickly generate a "random encounter."

52 K >zwi gonna vid the the- vit the< big bo::ys
 53 K ^BUT NO:::^o::: .hh **hoo**
 54 DM A::nd then w[e've got three::]
 55 K [All:: gonna die,] all:: gonna die (.) .hhh
 56 DM >Then we have< three large ((unclear))=
 57 Bf =I'm g'nna die.
 58 Bf >I have a< bad feeling about that.
 59 A Yeah a lot of you guys are gonna [((unclear))]
 60 K [WHY *don*'tchoo guys just]
 61 K jet out.
 62 Bf Ar [I'm say]ing.
 63 K ['m fine.]
 64 Bf Tha'hat's wha I said hehefaha.
 65 K God damn.

As DM places a huge Inevitable on the battle-map, K asks with some marked emphasis in 22 if the current session is a “random encounter” (see footnote 27). DM responds with some strong emphasis of his own, in particular heavily marking 23's “Oh no” and then asserting that DM “came up with this” on his own in 25. K's “oh” is given significant emphasis and elongation before overlapping in laughter with M in 26 and 27. Why the change-of-state token in 26 in regards to the generation of the day's session? One possible explanation might be game-play oriented. Each of the player's characters are considered at this point to be epic level: most Dungeons and Dragons campaigns begin, predictably, with each of the player character's at level 1. This campaign, however, represented a continuation of the previous campaign, at the end of which each of the characters had already reached level 20. By the time players reach this level, they are near god-like in their power and ability and, as I found, the DM's role can be quite difficult in terms of coming up with encounters that constitute a true challenge or represent a significant threat to the party. The type of random encounters available in the

majority of Dungeons and Dragons source-books rarely pose a risk to epic level characters, so K's change-of-state here may be a recognition of the seriousness of this encounter and the threat it might represent to the party: this is not just some event that happens to everyone who comes to this area, but something designed by DM specifically to challenge this particular party.²⁷

DM goes on to take several turns (28-37) explaining the exact nature of the encounter, explaining how and why it was that the Inevitables managed to arrange the ambush. First, DM declares how the Inevitable guard outside the fortress/library informed other Inevitables that “had beef” (the ones who guard the laws and function of time) with K and others in the party of their presence (28-32). DM elaborates further in 35-37 to explain why that guard had not attacked them himself when they first approached the location they have just emerged from.²⁸ This was information that the characters would not have access to, and thus DM was not required to reveal, but chose to contribute anyway. By providing an explanation for why events are happening as they are within the collaborative story, DM's optional narrative construction attends in part to the Ideal of mutual involvement and achievement, and draws attention to DM's particular contributions.

²⁷ Although it was K's agenda to seek out and pick a fight with some Inevitables, I as DM actually co-opted his agenda into my own story-telling agenda, deciding to incorporate the Inevitables into part of a vast conspiracy that formed the key source of intrigue for this campaign, so this encounter not only held game-play significance as a challenging battle, but also had story-related significance that would not become fully clear until much later. Whether I or (less likely) K were attending to this latter story-focused significance during this particular exchange, however, is unclear and not clearly evidenced in the talk.

²⁸ As noted previously, the Inevitables are extremely lawful, but each one has a particular domain of the law which is theirs to enforce.

While Bf orients to the challenge of the uniquely designed encounter in 41, once more looking for some avenue of escape, K audibly takes in and exhales two deep and rasping breaths across 40 and 43. What follows over the course of 46-55 is another expressive performance by K. 46 is delivered with an affected rasp, and pauses occur after “kill,” “every,” and “last.” He cuts himself off in 48 before adding an expletive, then erupts in 50 with an announcement concerning leaving something alone, repeating it in 51. Grammar and articulation seem to fail him in 52, but one can make out “gonna visit the big boys.”²⁹ In 53, he concludes with the high-volume and elongated “but no.” Given this last utterance, one can begin to make sense of K's contributions across 40-53. Recall that K came to this place with the express agenda of finding some Inevitables on their home turf and bringing the fight to them, yet when he encountered Inevitables guarding the fortress/library who did not seem to want to immediately kill him, like all the other Inevitables he had heretofore met, he instead waited and found out where the “big boys” could be found. In 50-52, then, K reveals that it had been his agenda to bide his time until he might be able to face the Inevitable Elders, avoid fighting the Inevitables he had encountered here, and to (prefaced by K's use of past tense in 50-52,) make clear in 53 that the previous agenda is no longer possible and now they're “all gonna die,” as K twice asserts in 55.

K seems to cross participation frames here between player and character,

²⁹ While inside the library/fortress, K's character did some digging into the background of the Inevitables, inquiring as to where they came from, and learned of two Inevitable-controlled cities. The “big boys” he is referring to are likely the 12 Elders of the Inevitables, who oversee the construction and programming of new Inevitables.

performing an elaborate display of anger and frustration. What exactly is this in response to? By this point, the party had been aware of the ambush event for some ten minutes,³⁰ so the issue for K is not simply that the party is being attacked by the Inevitables. Recall that K's outburst follows DM's optional narrative contribution. Once K is aware that this encounter is not just a random event but actually connected to the core collaborative story (or at least, that part of it associated with past conflicts between K and the Inevitables), he delivers an angry character performance. By seriously invoking his character role, in effect becoming his character, K as a player is taking on the constraints of his character, the limitations on his ability to pursue his own agenda. Such attention to game-role seems rooted in the Real rather than Ideal. K's suggestion in 60 that Bf and A “jet out,” after they express concerns about dying in 57-59, engenders a great deal of separation between K and other players. This attention to game-role, however, still attends to the overarching game-narrative being mutually achieved with DM, voicing the collaborative Ideal aspect of the dialectic. Given its placement subsequent to DM's voluntary narrative contributions in 28-37, 40-53 can be understood as the mutual achievement with DM of collaborative narrative as accomplished through K's character performance. K's expressiveness orients to DM's narrative contribution as an invitation for collaboration, essentially inviting the expressiveness K goes on to perform.

³⁰

Elaborate battles such as this sometimes require extensive preparation to set up.

Chapter 4:

Discussion

Baxter and Montgomery (1996) describe an RDT view of communication as an “interactive, involving, and *situated* process that produces multiple meanings that simultaneously differentiate and connect participants ... [a process which] must be addressed as something creatively and uniquely constituted in partners' interlaced actions” (p. 42, emphasis added). Endogenous phenomena such as friending cannot be said to exist from a RDT perspective except insofar as the phenomena is grounded by and enacted in talk-in-interaction. As such, it is of critical importance to ground Rawlins' (1992) dialectics of friendship in the actual talk among friends. The preceding analysis has provided extensive evidence addressing the research question by evidencing the ways these friendship dialectics are enacted by this group of friends engaged in a role-playing game. Reflecting on this research agenda, the following discussion will explore what has been learned through the analysis, consider the strengths and limitations of this study and present implications for future research.

Close examination of the talk amongst this group of Dungeons and Dragons players has provided a new type of evidence for Rawlins' (1992) dialectics of friendship at the micro-level of talk. Not only is there evidence of intersections among the six dialectics in the conversational actions taken by participants, but also across the enactment of the dialectics, certain patterns begin to emerge.

In order to help make this clear, the segments of talk have been reprinted here

with notations inserted as shorthand for the extensive analysis conducted in Chapter 3. At first glance, the notations added to the transcripts in what follows may appear to be the very sort of observer coding of interaction (apart from regard to participant understandings) that researchers in conversation analysis have long argued to be inadequate. That is not the case. The notations are employed here as convenient shorthand to summarize the complex interplay of friendship dialectics that I had earlier argued to be linked to particular conversational actions, or in terms of which such action can also be interpreted. The arguments in Chapter 3 regarding the nature of particular conversational actions are fully consistent with the practice in conversation analysis of grounding the analyst's understanding of what the participants themselves achieved in the very same evidence of understanding that the participants' themselves employ; i.e. the uptake they provide one another in the sequential unfolding of conversation (Arundale, 2010, p. 155-156).

These notations serve as shorthand to indicate the following: the dyad negotiating a dialectic, the dialectic under negotiation, and the particular aspect(s) of the dialectic given voice by the utterance, highlighted in bold. In cases where multiple dialectics intersect, each is listed subsequently, though it should be noted there is not any hierarchy implied among the dialectics, given the principle of totality. The abbreviations are as follows: Idl/Rel = Ideal and Real; Ind/Dep = Independence and Dependence; Aff/Ins = Affection and Instrumentality; Jud/Acc = Judgment and Acceptance; and Exp/Prt = Expressiveness and Protectiveness.

4.1 Enactment of Dialectics

(1) dndrecord.mp3 0:05:19

DYAD DIAL

01 M ^Eastern monk? Or. Western monk.
 02 (.)
 03 ? Hmm=
 04 M =Like ^western battle monk? ...
 05 M OR more like uh. *(Native.)*
 06 (1.5)
 07 K K-M **Ind/Dep** ^Really he's-
 08 S S-K **Ind/Dep** >Iz like if ya took a< pimp,
 09 (.)
 10 S S-K **Ind/Dep** >and combined it with a< monk:
 S-K **Exp/Prt**
 S-K **Aff/Ins**
 S-K **Idl/Rel**
 11 (1.5)
 12 K K-S **Jud/Acc** [Like a west bank] style mung=
 13 S [((unclear))-]
 14 M =Mmkay.
 15 (.)
 16 K K-S **Exp/Prt** ^^Super pimp^^ SLA:::P Eh huh huh huh huh .hhh=
 K-S **Aff/Ins**
 K-S **Idl/Rel**

K and S's aside in 07-16 of segment (1) Expresses their mutual Dependence with and Affection for one another, attending to the Ideal of mutual achievement that characterizes friendship. S knows K well enough that he is able to speak for K in 08 and 10, supplying an answer to M's question. K's subsequent evaluation and alignment with this contribution attends to both Judgment and Acceptance simultaneously. Finally, K's performance of the intertextuality is again Expressive, demonstrating to S K's affection for him and his contributions via the Ideal of collaborative achievement.

17 M M-K **Aff/Ins** =>So iz< (.) you ave like, religious symbols?

	M-K Jud/Acc	
	M-K Ind/Dep	
18 M		and stuff on im [((unclear))]
19 K	K-M Idl/Rel	[No]
	K-M Ind/Dep	
20 K	K-M Exp/Prt	Actually. Here lemme describe him.
21 K		I have uh- certain magical abilities. I have ...
22 K		>But I didn't< take n prestige class for'em
23 K		*althou::gh I uh took* uh quirks [for'em.]
24 M		[Okay.]
25 M	M-K Exp/Prt	Ta[toos] are awesome though.
	M-K Jud/Acc	
	M-K Aff/Ins	
26 K		[so uh-]
27 M		Maybe um have your guy just be shirtless=
28 K		=[yeah. And- dude- and]
29 M		[((unclear))]
30 K		and my <u>tattoos</u> are those uh. Wer.
31 K		My <u>tattoos</u> is actually more of a scarification?
32 K		But it's very fi::ne? [So::]
33 M	M-K Idl/Rel	[oh so's] all red?
34 K	K-M Jud/Acc	Well no- nn- y'know how=
	K-M Idl/Rel	
	K-M Ind/Dep	
	K-M Exp/Prt	
35 DM		=>Oghay<=
36 K		=y'know how ...
37 K		Like there's this certain scarification
38 K		that makes a very smoo::th uh um.
39 (1.0)		
40 K		How can I put it like- build up of skin?
41 K		Y'know it's=
42 M	M-K Aff/Ins	=yeah, blister.=
	M-K Idl/Rel	
43 K	K-M Idl/Rel	=Yeah it's- <u>yeah</u> almost like a smooth blister? ...
44 K		That's basically what he's done with his ...
45 M		So it's kinda [like-]
46 K		[>so its ac]tually< quite beautiful?
47 K		[but]
48 M		[It show-] it shows
49 M	M-K Aff/Ins	kind of re:d. Like it-
50 K	K-M Jud/Acc	Mmm[mm.]

	K-M Exp/ Prt	
	K-M Idl/ Rel	
	K-M Ind /Dep	
51 M	M-K Idl/ Rel	[or uh-] what's the color of his skin.
	M-K Aff/ Ins	
52 K		Uh, white.
53 M		Okay so: th' scars [a::re]
54 K		[>they'd be<] kinda like me,
55 K		more, like, [when]
56 M		[>so like<]
57 M		<u>old</u> scars *that* sho::w-
58 K		Mmhm=
59 M		=like darker.
60 (.5)		
61 K		Yeah like <u>this</u> .
62 M		Yeah something like that. Pinker. Pinkish.
63 K	K-M Ind /Dep	Well (.) Not really. I- I look at it as as more ...
	K-M Idl/ Rel	
	K-M Exp /Prt	
	K-M Jud /Acc	
64 (.5)		
65 M		<u>Oh</u> [okay]
66 K		['s white-] 's white inna (.) yeah.

In contrast to K and S's aside, across 17-63, M and K appear to enact Independence and the Real task of how K's character can be described, with each Expressing Judgments concerning their ability to achieve an instrumental task. K's task-oriented disaligning moves in 19-23, 34-39, and in 50 invoke his autonomy in deciding how his character should or should not be presented, but do not fully articulate judgments, instead enacting Protectiveness towards M as K seeks to provide M with means which might allow M to answer his questions for himself. Protectiveness, in this case, actually seems to attend to separateness and instrumental concerns in the dyad as K and M attempt to complete the task of clarifying the description of K's character.

(2) dndrecord.mp3 01:15:20

01 K		Soo (.) the -the first go is gonna be forty six?
02 (1.0)		
03 DM		Lessee this is taskmaster C? Mmkay.
04 K		Yeah.
05 (1.4)		
06 DM		Ehakay.
07 (1.0)		
08 K	K-DM Idl/ Rel	So the first one's fortysix, the next one is ...
09 DM	DM-K Idl/Rel DM-K Ind/ Dep	=O*kay, >he's dead<.=
10 K	K-DM Idl/Rel K-DM Ind/ Dep K-DM Exp/Prt	=Okay^. (.6) Alrihahh=
11 DM	DM-K Ind/Dep DM-K Idl/ Rel DM-K Exp/Prt DM-K Jud/Acc	=<And that's yur> att <u>a</u> cks. [Um.]
12 K	K-DM Ind/Dep K-DM Idl/ Rel K-DM Exp/Prt K-DM Jud/Acc	[>Ahcan] I not<
13 K		^go for >the <u>o</u> ther <u>g</u> uy<?
14 (.)		
15 DM	DM-K Exp/Prt DM-K Jud/ Acc DM-K Idl/ Rel	>Well actually< you wouldn't necessarily ...
16 DM		If he'd fell so uh:: and since h- since Matt is ...
17 DM		=Matt's going to have to dodge your next ...
18 M		=mhmhuh <u>A</u> wsome.
19 DM		So uh:::, [roll] your attack rolls for the last ...
20 M		[Do it.]

In segment (2), K and DM experience a shift in dialectical tensions, going from emphasizing alignment and Dependence, and the Ideal of mutual involvement in 09 and 10, to DM's invocation of game-roles and the separateness it constitutes in 11-15. K and DM demonstrate this shift in orientation to each other through changes in rhythm, turn

construction, and transition construction.

(3)	dndrecord.mp3	01:16:53
01 A	A-M Idl/ Rel A-M Exp/Prt A-M Jud/Acc A-M Aff/ Ins	<u>Dude</u> . That'll [teach you to roll up (and do a)]
02 K		[So:: (.) I- uh]
03 K	K-DM Idl/ Rel	I'm rolling against his armor class?= =Can't [play with the <u>big dawgs!</u>]
04 A	A-M Idl/ Rel A-M Exp/Prt A-M Jud/Acc A-M Aff/ Ins	
05 DM	DM-M Idl/ Rel DM-M Exp/ Prt	[yeah, hope he roll- if he- hope] he ...
06 (.6)		
07 K	K-DM Idl/ Rel K-M Idl/ Rel K-M Exp/ Prt	Yah. <u>Orwell</u> . Oka <u>y</u> .
08 (1.0)		((dice roll))
09 A	A-M Exp/ Prt A-M Idl/ Rel	How much health? Do you <u>have</u> right now, ...
10 K	K-M Idl/ Rel K-M Exp/ Prt	No I hit.=
11 DM	DM-K Idl/ Rel DM-K Exp/Prt DM-M Exp/Prt	=Y[ou are <u>slashing</u>] in the dark.
12 M		[Ahunnerd and forty three.]
13 (.5)		((dice roll))
14 K		Yeah, I am. <u>I hit</u> .
15 (3.0)		((dice roll))
16 K		Yeah I [hit.]
17 A		[Hit.]
18 DM		Al [^] <u>right</u> .
19 K		So.
20 K		[Matt.]
21 DM	DM-K Idl/ Rel DM-M Idl/ Rel DM-? Exp/Prt DM-K/M Aff/ Ins	[Roll [^] <u>DA</u>]mage!
22 K	K-M Idl/ Rel	You take (.5) *oh man.* .hhh

	K-M Exp/Prt	
23 A	A-M Exp/ Prt	[Ma::n.]
	A-M Idl/Rel	
24 K	A-M Idl/Rel	[You take] <u>fifty</u> <u>three</u> <u>damage</u> , forty <u>six</u> , ...
25 K		So[o::]
26 M	M-? Idl/Rel	[>Du]de, I'm< <u>Dead</u> (?)
	M-? Exp/Prt	

Nearly every dyadic interaction in segment (3) involves M in some way. 01-04 enacts the Real in terms of the separation involved as the players orient towards game role tasks, at the expense of the connection with M that the Ideals of friendship would emphasize, A in particular levying Expressions of Judgment and ridicule. DM's utterance in 05 enacts protectiveness and marks a shift in dialectic in its simultaneous expression of the Ideal, via concern for M, and the Real lack of options M has within the constraints of the game. K also enacts this both/andness, withholding Judgments and Expressing concern for M but also attending to the action's inevitability, a tension of the Ideal and Real that remains present throughout his negotiation of the attacks against M. Even A gives voice to the tension, enacting Protectiveness in his questions about M's character's HP, as well as the concern-for-other Ideal.

27 A	A-M Idl/Rel	*gzhaHAHAHA:: .hhhh
	A-M Exp/Prt	
	A-M Aff/Ins	
28 (B)	B-DM Idl/Rel	No(?) the [thing=]
	B-M Exp/Prt	
29 A	A-M Idl/Rel	[AH:::: HA::::]
	A-M Exp/Prt	
	A-M Aff/Ins	
30 K	K-? Idl/Rel	[=that's- that's like a hun]dred
	K-? Exp/Prt	

	K-M Aff/ Ins	
31 K		and fifty damage.=
32 M		=Yeah
33 B		<u>Bran</u> [don.]
34 K	K-? Exp /Prt K-? Idl / Rel K-M Aff/ Ins	[<u>BLULA</u>] <u>LALOAR</u>
35 K		<u>Aha</u> [hahuha.] [a^huhuhuha::]
36 B	B-DM Idl / Rel B-M Idl / Rel	[Did he hit] all three [times when he ...]
37	A-M Exp /Prt A-M Jud / Acc A-M Aff/ Ins	((Clap)) ((clap)) ((clap)) ((clap))
38 DM		=Yeah.=
39 A	A-M Exp /Prt A-M Jud / Acc A-M Aff/ Ins	=br <u>A:::</u> [v <u>o</u> .=]
40 K		[^hehehe]

The dialectics in play shift dramatically again across 27-40 as the group reacts to M's death, seeing it as a cause for mocking laughter and other separating actions. Here, the Real is in tension with the Ideals of friendship, in that M's death is taken up as an Instrumental benefit as a source of humor for the group, at the expense of Affection and intimacy with M. However, the Ideal of mutual achievement and collaborative action is enacted as well, in that the group members do express some appreciation for M's contribution, and therefore Acceptance of M himself.

41 M	M-? Jud / Acc M-? Exp /Prt M-? Idl / Rel	[=*G <u>rea</u>]t.
42 K	K-M Idl / Rel K-M Exp / Prt K-M Jud / Acc	*m' <u>S</u> o <u>rry</u> <u>d</u> awg, I'll bring <u>y</u> ou <u>b</u> a:ck=
43 M	M-K Idl / Rel M-K Aff / Ins	=^ha[ha]ha=

08 K	K-Bf Exp/Prt K-Bf Jud/Acc K-Bf Idl/Dep	>You have a< <u>great</u> (.) <u>day</u> .
09 mult	Mult Idl/Rel	[*((overlapping laughter – Bf, S, M, A))*]
10 B		[Hey (.) When] you're doing
11 B		initiative? is it just the number on the dice? ...
12 DM		[Dex.]
13 DM		It's the <u>Dee</u> tw[enty:: plus d]ex.
14 K		[you add <u>dex</u>]
15 B		Dex? Oh kay. >So I got<
16 (2.0)		
17 B		[Mmm:::] (.) Tw[enny-two.]
18 M		[^Um.] (.) [I don't real]ly care I mean
19 M	M-Bf Idl/Dep M-? Idl/Rel	these guys are following the <u>law</u> and I'm ...
20 B		=I got a twenny-two on my initiative.
21 M	M-K Ind/Dep	Butuh:: (.) if <u>you</u> don't like ['em]
22 Bf		[I got] seventeen=
23 M	M-K Idl/Rel M-K Ind/Dep M-K Aff/Ins	= <u>Fuck</u> 'em.
24 mult		[((snort from two))]
25 K	K-M Exp/Prt K-M Idl/Rel K-M Aff/Ins K-M Jud/Acc	[<u>Thanks</u> Matt.]
26 M		^^eh heh <u>heh</u> ^^=
27 A		=yeah butchoo <u>gotta</u> [careful-]
28 K	K-M Exp/Prt K-M Idl/Rel K-M Aff/Ins K-M Jud/Acc	[coo::l] homie.

Segment (4) begins with Bf enacting separateness, noting the ways he is Independent and autonomous from K, attending to his own Instrumental concerns at the expense of the Ideal of mutual support. B Accepts Bf's right to Independence in 04, while K's sarcastic responses in 05 and 08 Express a Judgment regarding Bf's self-serving autonomy. In 19, M seems at first to be enacting his own autonomy, noting his shared

alignment with the creatures, but this game-role orientation (Real) shifts as he delivers a conditional statement in 21 attending to his (inter)dependence with K. M utters the upshot of the conditional in 23, his declaration here enacting the Ideal of mutual support and Affection for K, while simultaneously attending to the instrumental aspects of lending aid. K takes up the Affection/Instrumentality both/andness in his appreciation of M's support in 25, Expressing Acceptance of M in 28 by labeling him as a “homie.”

- 27 A =yeah butchoo gotta [careful-]
 28 K [coo:l] homie.
 29 A A-M **Jud/Acc** You gotta be careful with <doing that>.
 A-M **Exp/Prt**
 A-M Ind/**Dep**
 A-M **Idl/Rel**
 30 M M[mhm.]
 31 A [you're] gonna lose all you're paladin ...
 32 M M-A **Ind/Dep** I'm- [I'm] lawful neutral.
 33 A [>so if y-<]
 34 (.5)
 35 B B-A **Jud/Acc** Yeah, [but-] if you're lawful.
 B-A **Exp/Prt**
 B-A Ind/**Dep**
 B-A **Idl/Rel**
 36 A [uh]
 37 A Yeah.
 38 K K-M Ind/**Dep** So but you're protecting yourself.
 K-M Jud/**Acc**
 K-M **Idl/Rel**
 K-A **Jud/Acc**
 K-A **Ind/Dep**
 K-A **Idl/Rel**
 39 M Yeah but, our party is-
 40 A A-M Jud/**Acc** Yea:h. [As long as-]
 A-M **Ind/Dep**
 41 M M-A **Ind/Dep** [gettin fucked] up ... so:: fuck 'em.
 M-? Ind/**Dep**
 M-? **Idl/Rel**

42 K	K-M Idl /rel K-M Ind/ Dep K-M Aff /Ins	[Fuckem.]
43 M		[.hh*^^ehhehehe^^*]
44 K	K-? Aff / Ins	They're attackin us. *Eh huh huh*=
45 Bf	Bf-K Jud / Acc Bf-K Exp /Prt Bf-K Aff / Ins	= 's true.

By warning M of the dangers of violating one's alignment in 29 and 31, A is Expressing a Judgment of M, but notice that this is not a directly evaluative statement. By positioning his criticism as a warning rather than directly telling M that he is making a poor decision, A still attends to Protectiveness. The move denies M his autonomy, enacting Dependence, but this expression of concern still critically attends to an Ideal of concern for other. M asserts his justification for the rule violation in 32, but in 35 A does not accept this as adequate, and in this way M and A give voice to the tension between Independence and Dependence, with M's right to make his own decisions called into question. K's observation at 38 attends to two dyads at once, Accepting M's decision and supporting it with an additional consideration, aligning with M as he separates from A. A orients to this contribution as significant enough to change his position on the matter in 40, coming to Accept M's independent choice. K furthers his and M's interdependence by mirroring M in 42. K appends his observation from 38 with another in 44, noting that "they attacked us," which Bf acknowledges with "it's true." This last utterance at 45 recalls the still-open issue of whether or not to aid K, and by changing his state on the subject, Bf Expresses Acceptance of the Instrumentality of supporting K.

(5) dndrecord.mp3 2:23:05

01 Bf [You bet]ter be fuckin::
 02 DM [Uh.]
 03 Bf Bf-K **Exp/Prt** nimble jack quick [and all that great] stuff.=
 Bf-K **Aff/Ins**
 04 M [nmnhe ((snort))]
 05 K =I am.=
 06 Bf =alright=
 07 DM =We're gonna have two (.) um.
 08 Bf Bf-? **Ind/Dep** 'M not going down [*for anybody*]
 Bf-? **Aff/Ins**
 09 DM [Maruts?]=
 10 K =*oh .hh hu f: [guh*]
 11 M [haHAHA huh]
 12 M M-Bf **Ind/Dep** I'm not going do[wn for you:], [or any:body::]
 M-Bf **Exp/prt**
 M-Bf **Jud/Acc**
 M-Bf **Aff/Ins**
 13 K K-Bf **Ind/Dep** [huh huh gu-] [or any:body::]=
 K-Bf **Exp/prt**
 K-Bf **Jud/Acc**
 K-Bf **Aff/Ins**
 K-M **Exp/Prt**
 K-M **Aff/Ins**
 K-M **Idl/rel**

In this final segment, Bf enacts his Independence once again, asserting in 03 that K had best be “nimble jack quick” with his Instrumental support, as Bf is “not going down for anybody.” M and K align in 12 and 13, enacting a collaborative sarcastic Expression of their orientation to Bf’s instrumental moves by performing as Bf’s character, explicitly drawing attention to 08’s self-serving quality but also finding humor in it, Judging Bf while simultaneously demonstrating appreciation of (or Affection for) his contribution. In this way, M and K co-opt (and therefore Accept) Bf’s separateness to establish connection via the mutual achievement Ideal.

14 DM =These maruts themselves are actually u::m
 15 (2.0)
 16 DM ^Are they huge?
 17 (1.0)
 18 DM
 22 K K-DM Idl/**Rel** Iz'is a random encounter you just=
 23 DM =Oh no
 24 (.)
 25 DM DM-K **Ind/Dep** I came up with this on my own.
 DM-K **Aff/Ins**
 DM-K Idl/**Rel**
 26 K K-DM **Aff/Ins** Oh:::. [He huh huh]
 K-DM Idl/**Rel**
 27 M [He ha]
 28 DM Basic'ly the inevitable guarry? (.) Still told.
 29 (.)
 30 DM the other inevitables that you were here.
 31 (.)
 32 DM [The ones that] guard time.
 33 (?) [((unclear))]
 34 (.5)
 35 DM ^HE^ didn't have any problems with you ...
 36 DM That wasn't his law to guard, >but he< told ...
 37 DM DM-? **Aff/Ins** >who id it< was their job was wha'it was.
 DM-? **Idl/Rel**
 38 A They're like oh, thanks, buddy.
 39 (.5)
 40 K K-? **Exp/Prt** [.hhhhh **hoo:::**] [.hhhh]
 41 Bf Bf-DM **Aff/Ins** [I'm takin the elevator back. up] (.) [that's ...]
 Bf-? **Ind/Dep**
 42 A A-? **Ind/Dep** [I'm in tow::n.]
 43 K K-? **Exp/Prt** [**hoo:::**]
 44 DM DM-Bf Idl/**Rel** [*it's not (going to do that)*]=
 DM-Bf **Aff/Ins**
 45 Bf =Gaw::d dammit.
 46 K **Ghod** I am gonna kill, every (.) **last** (.)
 47 K K-? **Exp/Prt** one of em I see now
 K-DM **Aff/Ins**
 K-DM Idl/**Rel**
 48 K [th're **fuck it**]
 49 DM [er hnnhm]

50 K		>I was gonna< >LEAVE IT <u>ALONE</u> <
51 K		>I was gonna< >LEAVE IT ALONE<
52 K		>zwi gonna vid the the- vit the< <u>big bo::ys</u>
53 K		^BUT NO::: ^o::: .hh **hoo**
54 DM		A::nd then w[e've got three::]
55 K	K-? Exp/Prt K-? Idl/Rel K-DM Idl/Rel	[<u>All::</u> gonna die,] <u>all::</u> gonna die ...
56 DM		>Then we have< three large ((unclear))=
57 Bf		=I'm g'nna die.
58 Bf		>I have a< bad feeling about that.
59 A		Yeah a <u>lot</u> of you guys are gonna [((unclear))]
60 K		[WHY *don*'tchoo guys just]
61 K	K-Bf Exp/Prt K-Bf Jud/Acc K-Bf Idl/Rel K-Bf Ind/Dep	<u>jet out</u> .
62 Bf		Ar [<u>I'm</u> say]ing.
63 K	K-Bf Ind/Dep	['m <u>fine</u> .]
64 Bf		Tha'hat's wha I said hehefaha.
65 K	K-Bf Exp/Prt K-Bf Jud/Acc K-Bf Idl/Rel	God damn.

DM enacts his game-role in 25-37, drawing attention to his Instrumental contributions as DM. Bf enacts self-preservation and Independence once again in 41, subsequent to DM's narrative contribution while K begins Expressing his own take on the new account in 40, performing his game-role to the extreme across 46-65, enacting his Independence from the other players in the process at 60, 61, 63, and 65, but still critically attending to DM's contribution, orienting the Ideal of mutual achievement of this battle's significance for the collaborative story and the player's characters.

4.2 Performance as Appreciation

Performances like K's in segment (5) are scattered throughout the interaction

examined in this study. Their prevalence here may be in part due to the inherent tension between player and character set up by the constraints of the game, but regardless of what allows for such Expressiveness, the purposes for which they are used are of particular interest. In segment (1), line 16, K's "Super Pimp SLAP" is an Expressive move enacting the connection between himself and S, orienting to dialectics of mutual Dependence with and Affection for one another, and attending to the Ideal of mutual achievement. In contrast, A's performances in segment (3) at lines 27, 29, 46, and 47 enact significant separation and Judgment rather than Acceptance, his performances of laughter and Expressions of amusement at M's expense, suggesting Instrumentality far more than Affection. Likewise, K's grandstanding in segment (3) via his performance of his attack in 34 attends to M's contributions primarily as examples of his own (or at least his character's) superiority, a Judgment of M's contributions in light of their Instrumental benefit to K. M and K's collaborative hijacking of Bf's contribution in 08 of segment (5) likewise draws attention to the separateness and Independence enacted by Bf's self-serving actions. Finally, K's performance at the end of segment (5), while attending to the collaborative construction of narrative with DM, still leads to him making several Independence-enacting moves. Performances like these, then, while clearly Expressive, vary in purpose as they intersect with Judgment/Acceptance, Independence/Dependence, and Affection/Instrumentality. Even as these performances emphasize Judgment, Independence, and Instrumentality, however, they still seem to enact appreciation for something contributed by another. Even mocking performances such as those evident in

segment (3) still demonstrate Acceptance of a friend's contribution, even as the performances criticize it. Simply because an individual laughs at or mocks a friend's contributions does not mean that the individual is not appreciative of the mutual achievement enacted and thus, even while demonstrating *schadenfreude*, friends can still display a simultaneous orientation to Affection.

4.3 Locating Friendship

Performances, then, certainly seem to have a role as a communicative practice friends use in their enactment of friendship, but what of grounding friendship itself? Consider the relationship between K and M. Recall that the two players had very little interaction with one another prior to this recording being made, aware of the other's presence in general terms, but primarily as acquaintances. Segment (1), taken from the first few minutes of the recording, attests to their initial separateness. Much of their interaction at this stage is task-oriented, attending to game-role concerns. M enacts multiple variations on his information-seeking agenda to learn more about K's character, with K primarily focusing on game-mechanics as opposed to M's pursuit of physical description. Even as this task begins to be mutually achieved, K levies a Judgment concerning M's interpretations of K's character, a problem which takes several turns to fully address. However, even at this early stage, these separating moves also enact a certain amount of Protectiveness: while K repeatedly disagrees with M, his criticisms of M's expressed interpreting of K's character are indirectly presented, providing to M minimal nonconfirming responses followed by relevant information that can aid M in

answering his own questions for himself, orienting to M's autonomy and Independence and enacting the Ideal of collaborative mutual achievement. Even in these initial conversational actions, K and M are already attending to concerns of friendship even as they diverge on instrumental matters.

When M's character makes his entrance, K's character almost immediately (and brutally) murders him in segment (3), but during the negotiation of the attacks in 07-25 which lead to the death, K again enacts Protectiveness (as opposed to A's moves to directly Express Judgments of M's actions in 01 and 04), his utterances here marked by hesitation, delay, minimal response, self-interruption, and significant pauses. In addition to withholding Judgment, these conversational actions enact concern for other, a key Ideal of friendship.

A shift in the dialectics occurs subsequent to M's announcement of his demise in 26. K seems to get a kick out of it, M's death serving the Instrumental self-aggrandizement of K's character, K's subsequent performance of the deathblows enacting superiority of his character over M's as well as the same sort of *schadenfreude* that has marked A's utterances. However, in light of the previous discussion on performances, K's high-volume war cry can also be seen to be displaying appreciation for the contributions of another. If not for M's actions inadvertently creating the conditions for his character's death, K would not be able to create this display, recognizing the event as a mutual achievement. Thus the performance serves the dual purposes of enacting both the Ideal and the Real: through making fun of M's character's death, K displays an appreciation and

acceptance of M. M himself seems to orient to this both/andness of his and K's enactment of Affection and Instrumentality, accepting his character's death with sarcasm and laughter, displaying his own appreciation.

By the time we get to segment (4), K and M's conversational actions are distinctly different than in segment (1).

18 M		[^Um.] (.) [I don't real]ly care I mean
19 M	M-Bf Ind/Dep M-? Idl/ Rel	these guys are following the <u>law</u> and I'm ...
20 B		=I got a twenny-two on my initiative.
21 M	M-K Ind/ Dep	Butuh:: (.) if <u>you</u> don't like ['em]
22 Bf		[I got] seventeen=
23 M	M-K Idl/Rel M-K Ind/ Dep M-K Aff/Ins	= <u>Fuck</u> 'em.

In 18-23, M illustrates his interdependence with K, justifying the violation of his alignment and in so doing enacts mutual support and concern for other. Indeed, when M is subsequently challenged, K comes to M's aid, supporting M's independence to be interdependent with K. By segment (5), the two even closer interdependence, collaboratively completing a spontaneous mocking performance of Bf in 12 and 13.

When these two young men came to the table to play together, they were mere acquaintances. Now, just three hours later, and without explicitly disclosing much about their personal histories, values, beliefs, needs, or feelings, they are literally finishing each others' sentences. In a very short amount of time, K and M come to dyadically enact the Ideals of friendship in complex interaction with Affection and Instrumentality, Judgment and Acceptance, Expressiveness and Protectiveness, and the freedom to be Independent

in conjunction with the freedom to be Dependent.

4.4 Strengths and Limitations

In response to the research question, this study suggests strongly that Rawlins' (1992) dialectics of friendship are indeed evident in multiple ways in talk among friends engaged in a role-playing game. Examining segments of the talk among these men using the approach of conversation analysis reveals the resources and practices they employ in interactionally achieving a number of different conversational actions as their talk unfolds in sequence. This study has shown that many of these actions can be understood or interpreted as enactments of one or more of the contradictory poles of Rawlins' six dialectics, and that the dialectical tension with the opposite pole is often enacted either in prior, in subsequent, or at times in the same action within given friend-dyad(s). Rawlins notes that “a dialectical perspective calls for investigating and situating enactments of friendship in their concrete social conditions” (p. 273). In demonstrating the achievement of dialectical tensions in this manner, this study provides empirical grounding for both Rawlin's dialectical conceptualization of friending as endogenous to interaction, and for Relational Dialectics Theory (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996), demonstrating that dialectical contradictions, the tensions between their polarities, and their interdependence and interaction with other dialectics arises emergently out of talk-in-interaction, and is taken up and negotiated by participants.

Some concerns do arise, however, in applying the dialectics at this level, drawing attention to the need for continued refinement. While Judgment/Acceptance,

Expressiveness/Protectiveness, Independence/Dependence, and Affection/Instrumentality are relatively distinct at the conversational level, the dialectic of the Ideal and Real is somewhat vague, not just intersecting with, but overlapping each of the other four mentioned. In that sense, it represents something of a meta-dialectic, and hence is less useful in understanding concrete social achievement in everyday talk. Issues of mutual support, achievement, and concern do repeatedly arise, however, so perhaps the dialectic can be refined with a more narrow focus on mutual involvement. The dialectic of the Public and the Private is also exceedingly difficult to discern at this level of talk. The only real evidence for it might be in the intertextualities the players create as humorous devices. Analysis of other types of social situations may reveal this dialectic being enacted: these young men are here to play a game, first and foremost, and thus concerns beyond this setting may not be particularly salient.

Using an external theory such as Rawlins' (1992) may pose a problem of a priori theorizing, as Beach (2009) has noted, and indeed I found it altogether too easy to slip into language about talk as being influenced by these dialectics, rather than positioning the dialectics as emerging out of talk-in-interaction. Fortunately, CA's focus on grounding all interpretations in observable practices mitigates this problem, its systematic approach focusing on empirical evidence.

Further limitations to this study include the lack of visual data. Working from audio alone, it was difficult at times to determine who was talking to whom, given the talk's multi-party nature. Nonverbal gestures, expressions, and gaze would likely clarify

some of the more chaotic interaction that took place in this recording. Multi-party talk in general poses significant challenges, particularly given this group's tendencies towards overlapping talk and shouting. My role as researcher-as-participant is also a limitation in this study. These men were and are close friends, and it could be said that my own enactment of, say, the dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness might unduly influence my interpretations of the data. Again, while a possibility, the grounded nature of CA helped me avoid undue influence of my own half-remembered on-the-spot intuitions and assumptions.

4.5 Future Research

CA has a great deal of utility as method, directly addressing the call to ground dialectics in talk as it is occurring. Future research should consider applying CA to a variety of examples of friending, exploring how different groups' talk, for purposes other than those explored here, also enacts these dialectics. The Dialectic of the Public and the Private, for instance, likely represents a more complex phenomenon that would require longitudinal study.

Future studies should also explore gender differences in the dialectics of Affection/Instrumentality and Expressiveness/Protectiveness. These men do not seem to fit the norms of inexpressiveness, nor do they seem to lack empathy and affection for others, but they do seem to be enacting these phenomena in a way that varies from womens' friending practices. Given the privileging of the feminine ideals of self-disclosure as intimacy in much interpersonal communication research, it may be that the

more jocular approach employed by the men in this study has been overlooked.

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Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

Conversation Analysis, in its commitment to providing an exceedingly detailed and empirical representation of talk, uses a few transcription conventions you may be unfamiliar with. Transcripts follow the basic format as follows:

Line	Initial	Utterance
01	M	^Eastern monk? Or. Western monk.

If no one is speaking during the line, the initial of the participant is usually replaced with the length of the pause, or in the case of a micro-pause, just (.). In cases where the identity of the speaker is uncertain, it is enclosed in parentheses.

Other Conventions

or?	rising intonation
or.	falling intonation
o:r	indicates a held or elongated sound
^or^	encloses talk that is markedly higher pitched than talk adjacent to it
^^or^^	encloses talk delivered in falsetto
or	encloses talk that is markedly softer than talk adjacent to it
or	encloses whispery, raspy affectations of talk, sotto voce
OR	capitalization indicates talk that is markedly louder than talk adjacent to it
or-	a halt or sudden stop in talk, a break
[or]	encloses talk that overlaps with other utterances; simultaneous talk will align in the transcript
<u>or</u>	underlining indicates marked emphasis in tone or delivery
>or<	encloses talk that is notably faster than adjacent talk
<or>	encloses talk that is notable slower than adjacent talk
(or)	encloses talk that is questionable in its hearing and represents the analyst's best guess
((or))	encloses analyst notations and comments
or=	indicates an imperceptible gap between this utterance and the next
(.)	indicates a micro-pause
,	indicates a partial pause

Appendix B

Full Transcript

(1) dndrecord.mp3 0:05:19

01 M ^Eastern monk? Or. Western monk.
 02 (.)
 03 ? Hmm=
 04 M =Like ^western battle monk? O:r *more* eastern style.
 05 M OR more like uh. *(Native.)*
 06 (1.5)
 07 K ^Really he's-
 08 S >Iz like if ya took a< pimp,
 09 (.)
 10 S >and combined it with a< monk:
 11 (1.5)
 12 K [Like a west bank] style mung=
 13 S [((unclear))-]
 14 M =Mmkay.
 15 (.)
 16 K ^^Super pimp^^ SLA:::P Eh huh huh huh huh .hhh=
 17 M =>So iz< (.) you ave like, religious symbols?
 18 and stuff on im [((unclear))]
 19 K [No]
 20 Actually. Here lemme describe him.
 21 I have uh- certain magical abilities. I have tattoos on me? Uh-
 22 >But I didn't< take n prestige class for'em
 23 *althou::gh I uh took* uh quirks [for'em.]
 24 M [Okay.]
 25 Ta[toos] are awesome though.
 26 K [so uh-]
 27 M Maybe um have your guy just be shirtless=
 28 K =[yeah. And- dude- and]
 29 M [((unclear))]
 30 K and my tattoos are those uh. Wer.
 31 My tattoos is actually more of a scarification?
 32 K But it's very fi::ne? [So::]
 33 M [oh so's] all red?
 34 K Well no- nn- y'know how=

35 DM =>Oghay<=
36 K =y'know how, certain.
37 K Like there's this certain scarification
38 K that makes a very smoo::th uh um.
39 (1.0)
40 K How can I put it like- build up of skin?
41 K Y'know it's=
42 M =yeah, blister.=
43 K =Yeah it's- yeah almost like a smooth blister? Y'know?
44 K That's basically what he's done with his entire body.
45 M So it's kinda [like-]
46 K [>so its ac]tually< quite beautiful?
47 K [but]
48 M [It show-] it shows
49 M kind of re:d. Like it-
50 K Mmm[mm.]
51 M [or uh-] what's the color of his skin.
52 K Uh, white.
53 M Okay so: th' scars [a::re]
54 K [>they'd be<] kinda like me,
55 K more, like, [when]
56 M [>so like<]
57 M old scars *that* sho::w-
58 K Mmhm=
59 M =like darker.
60 (.5)
61 K Yeah like this.
62 M Yeah something like that. Pinker. Pinkish.
63 K Well (.) Not really. I- I look at it as as more of a white
64 (.5)
65 M Oh [okay]
66 K [I's white-] 's white inna (.) yeah.

(2) dndrecord.mp3 01:15:20

01 K Soo (.) the -the first go is gonna be forty six?
02 (1.0)
03 DM Lessee this is taskmaster C? Mmkay.
04 K Yeah.
05 (1.4)
06 DM Ehakay.
07 (1.0)

08 K So the first one's fortysix, the next one is fortyseven=
 09 DM =O*kay, >he's dead<.=
 10 K =Okay^. (.6) Alrihahh=
 11 DM =<And that's yur> attacks. [Um.]
 12 K [>Ahcan] I not<
 13 K ^go for >the other guy<?
 14 (.)
 15 DM >Well actually< you wouldn't necessarily know if he'd fuh-
 16 DM If he'd fell so uh:: and since h- since Matt is right there=
 17 DM =Matt's going to have to dodge your next two attacks=
 18 M =mhmhuh Awsome.
 19 DM So uh:::, [roll] your attack rolls for the last two attacks.
 20 M [Do it.]

(3) dndrecord.mp3 01:16:53

01 A Dude. That'll [teach you to roll up (and do a)]
 02 K [So:: (.) I- uh]
 03 K I'm rolling against his armor class?=
 04 A =Can't [play with the big dawgs!]
 05 DM [yeah, hope he roll- if he- hope] he rolls a one, dude.
 06 (.6)
 07 K Yah. Orwell. Okay.
 08 (1.0) ((dice roll))
 09 A How much health? Do you have right now, M[att?]
 10 K [No] I hit.=
 11 DM =Y[ou are slashing] in the dark.
 12 M [Ahunnerd and forty three.]
 13 (.5) ((dice roll))
 14 K Yeah, I am. I hit.
 15 (3.0) ((dice roll))
 16 K Yeah I [hit.]
 17 A [Hit.]
 18 DM Al^right.
 19 K So.
 20 K [Matt.]
 21 DM [Roll ^DA]mage!
 22 K You take (.5) *oh man.* .hhh
 23 A [Ma::n.]
 24 K [You take] fifty three damage, forty six, and forty seven.
 25 K So[o::.]
 26 M [>Du]de, I'm< Dead(?)

27 A *gzhaHAHAHA:: .hhhh
 28 (B) No(?) the [thing=]
 29 A [AH::: HA:::]
 30 K [=that's- that's like a hun]dred
 31 K and fifty damage.=
 32 M =Yeah
 33 B Bran[don.]
 34 K [BLULA]LALOAR
 35 K Aha[hahuha.] [a^huhuhuha::]
 36 B [Did he hit] all three [times when he flipped the coin?]=
 37 ((Clap)) ((clap)) ((clap)) ((clap))
 38 DM =Yeah.=
 39 A =brA::[vo.=]
 40 K [^hehehe]
 41 M [=*Grea]t.
 42 K *m'SOrry dawg, I'll bring you ba:ck=
 43 M =^ha[ha]ha=
 44 K [I-] =I'll bhehring you b[ahahack]
 45 M [^^ahahaHAHA hhh^^]
 46 A [I'M IN TOWN]
 47 A and I'm LAUGHin MY: ASS [off.=]
 48 M [Bwuha][hehehehe]
 49 B [=Ow.]
 50 K [=Awww ma]::n.
 51 M Hahaha.
 52 DM Alright.=
 53 K =At least the darkness goes away, right[teheh?]
 54 DM [Yeah]
 55 DM yeah it actually does.

(4) dndrecord.mp3 2:20:59

01 Bf Let him do his own shit, he's the one who's got beef.
 02 (1.5)
 03 Bf I mean era why're we here=
 04 B =Fine=
 05 K =Thanks, man=
 06 A =[^huh heh^]
 07 K [yeah.]
 08 K >You have a< great (.) day.
 09 mult [*((overlapping laughter – Bf, S, M, A))*]
 10 B [Hey (.) When] you're doing

11 B initiative? is it just the number on the dice? [af add] to:::
 12 DM [Dex.]
 13 DM It's the Dee tw[enty:: plus d]ex.
 14 K [you add dex]
 15 B Dex? Oh kay. >So I got<
 16 (2.0)
 17 B [Mmm:::] (.) Tw[enny-two.]
 18 M [^Um.] (.) [I don't real]ly care I mean
 19 M these guys are following the law and I'm lawful=
 20 B =I got a twenny-two on my initiative.
 21 M Butuh:: (.) if you don't like ['em]
 22 Bf [I got] seventeen=
 23 M =Fuck 'em.
 24 mult [((snort from two))]
 25 K [Thanks Matt.]
 26 M ^^eh heh heh^^=
 27 A =yeah butchoo gotta [careful-]
 28 K [coo::l] homie.
 29 A You gotta be careful with <doing that>.
 30 M M[mhm.]
 31 A [you're] gonna lose all you're paladin skills and sheit.
 32 M I'm- [I'm] lawful neutral.
 33 A [>so if y-<]
 34 (.5)
 35 B Yeah, [but-] if you're lawful.
 36 A [uh]
 37 A Yeah.
 38 K So but you're protecting yourself.
 39 M Yeah but, our party is-
 40 A Yea.h. [As long as-]
 41 M [gettin fucked] up by these guys, so:: fuck 'em.
 42 K [Fuckem.]
 43 M [.hh*^^ehhehehehe^^*]
 44 K They're attackin us. *Eh huh huh*=
 45 Bf ='s true.

(5) dndrecord.mp3 2:23:05

01 Bf [You bet]ter be fuckin::
 02 DM [Uh.]
 03 Bf nimbl::e jack quick [and all that great] stuff.=
 04 M [nmnhe ((snort))]

05 K =I am.=
 06 Bf =alright=
 07 DM =We're gonna have two (.) um.
 08 Bf 'M not going down [*for anybody*]
 09 DM [Maruts?]=
 10 K =*oh .hh hu f: [guh*]
 11 M [haHAHA huh]
 12 M I'm not going do[wn for you];, [or any:body::]
 13 K [huh huh gu-] [or any:body::]=
 14 DM =These maruts themselves are actually u::m
 15 (2.0)
 16 DM ^Are they huge?
 17 (1.0)
 18 DM As well?
 19 M *^^hee ha ha ha^^*=
 20 DM =I think they're huge as well.
 21 (.5)
 22 K Iz'is a random encounter you just=
 23 DM =Oh no
 24 (.)
 25 DM I came up with this on my own.
 26 K Oh::: [He huh huh]
 27 M [He ha]
 28 DM Basic'ly the inevitable guarry? (.) Still told.
 29 (.)
 30 DM the other inevitables that you were here.
 31 (.)
 32 DM [The ones that] guard time.
 33 (?) [((unclear))]
 34 (.5)
 35 DM ^HE^ didn't have any problems with you being here,
 36 DM That wasn't his law to guard, >but he< told the ones
 37 DM >who id it< was their job was wha'it was.
 38 A They're like oh, thanks, buddy.
 39 (.5)
 40 K [.hhhhh **hoo:::**] [.hhhhh]
 41 Bf [I'm takin the elevator back. up] (.) [that's what I'm doin.]
 42 A [I'm in tow::n.]
 43 K [**hoo:::**]
 44 DM [*it's not (going to do that)*]=
 45 Bf =Gaw::d dammit.
 46 K **Ghod** I am gonna kill, every (.) **last** (.)

47 K one of em I see now
 48 K [th're **fuck it**]
 49 DM [er hnnhm]
 50 K >I was gonna< >LEAVE IT ALONE<
 51 K >I was gonna< >LEAVE IT ALONE<
 52 K >zwi gonna vid the the- vit the< big bo::ys
 53 K ^BUT NO:::^o::..hh **hoo**
 54 DM A::nd then w[e've got three::]
 55 K [All:: gonna die,] all:: gonna die (.) .hhh
 56 DM >Then we have< three large ((unclear))=
 57 Bf =I'm g'nna die.
 58 Bf >I have a< bad feeling about that.
 59 A Yeah a lot of you guys are gonna [(((unclear)))]
 60 K [WHY *don*'tchoo guys just]
 61 K jet out.
 62 Bf Ar [I'm say]ing.
 63 K ['m fine.]
 64 Bf Tha'hat's wha I said hehefaha.
 65 K God damn.